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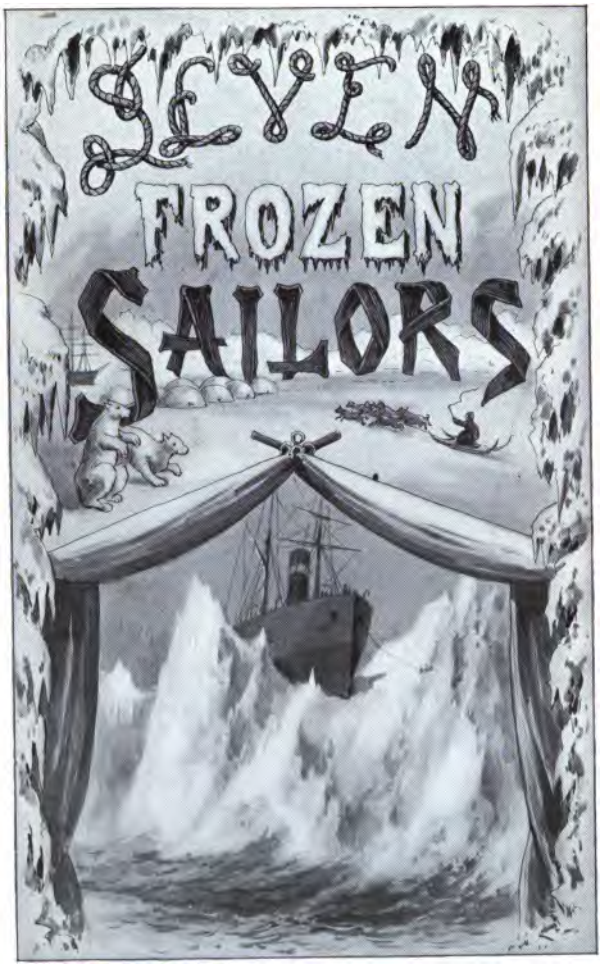
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SEVEN FROZEN SAILORS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW WE GOT THERE.

"BUT what are we going for?"

If he had not been so much of a gentleman, I should have said that the half-closing of his left eye and its rapid reopening had been a wink; as it was, we will say it was not. The next moment, he had thrown himself back in his chair, smiled, and said, quietly, "Not yet, captain—not yet. I'll tell you by-and-by. At present it is my secret. Waiter, fill these glasses again!"

"But look here," I said, as soon as the waiter had done his duty, "you can't sail right up into the Arctic circle without a crew."

"No," he said, shaking his head; "but *you* will go?"

"Well—yes," I said; "I don't mind. She's a smart steamer, and well found. I'll take her."

He rose solemnly from his chair, crossed to my side, and shook hands, before wabbling back and

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sitting down, filling the old-fashioned Windsor armchair so very full, that I wondered it didn't come to pieces.

I don't want to be personal, but he certainly was the fattest man I ever saw, and the most active. The Claimant was nothing to him. He looked perfectly stupid, as he sat there with a great wattle under his chin, which came all over his white neckerchief and clean-frilled shirt; and as he talked to you, he kept spinning round the great bunch of gold seals at the end of a watered silk ribbon, that hung over his glossy black trousers, while the huge flaps of his black bob-tail coat hung over the sides of the chair.

"You'll be my captain, then?" he said.

"Yes, sir, I'm ready," I replied; "but about the crew. Their first question will be, 'Is it whale or seal?'"

"Tell them—tell them," he said, musing,—"tell them *seal*, and we'll do a bit of sealing on the voyage; but, my dear Captain Cookson, the real object of our trip is at present *under* seal. You understand?"

I nodded.

"Then get a good, staunch, picked crew, and don't spare for expense. You'll want good first and second mates. Shall I engage them?"

"Oh, no, thanky, sir," I said, hastily; "I——"

"Captain Cookson here?" said a voice I knew, and Abram Bostock thrust his head just inside the door. "Oh, beg pardon, sir!"

"Come in, Abram!" I said, eagerly.

"Begging the gentleman's pardon," he said, wiping a little brown juice out of each corner of

his mouth; "I only wanted a word with you, skipper. Binny Scudds is outside."

"Bring him in, then!" I said, quickly.

Abram looked from one to the other, rubbed his hollow, sallow cheeks, upon which there was not a particle of hair, and then his body swayed about as if, being so thin, the draught of the door was blowing him,—"Bring him in?" he said.

"To be sure!" I exclaimed.

Tall, thin, Abram Bostock stared at my companion for a moment, and then backed out, to return directly with my old bos'en, Abinadab Scudds, half leading, half dragging him; and no sooner was the mahogany-faced old salt inside the door, and caught sight of the stranger, than he slewed round, and was half outside before Abram growled out, "Avast there!" collared him, and bringing him back, closed the door; when Scudds growled out something that seemed to come from somewhere below his waistband, and then, thoroughly captured, he stood, rolling his one eye from one to the other, and began to rub his shaggy head, ending by an old habit of his—namely, taking out a piece of rope, and beginning to unlay it.

"Begging the gentleman's pardon," said Abram, as he feasted on his goodly proportions, "I come to tell you, skipper, as they wants a cap'n and mates for the Gladiator."

"But you have not engaged?" I said, anxiously.

Scudds growled, bear-fashion, and shook his head.

"Because here's a chance for you, my lads!" I said. "I have engaged with Doctor—Doctor——"

"Curley," said my stout friend.

"With Doctor Curley, to command that smart steamer lying in the Greenland Dock, and we go up north. Will you come?"

"What arter?" growled Scudds, tearing at his piece of rope.

"Seal," I said, with a look at the doctor. "What do you say, Bostock?"

"Oh, I'm game, if you're going, skipper!" he said, staring at the doctor.

"And you, Scudds?"

"Same as Abram," growled Abinadab—Binny we called him, for short.

"This is lucky, doctor!" I said; "for our two friends here will soon get a good crew together. Plenty of men will be glad to join the vessel they sail in!"

"Don't you believe him, sir!" said Abram, polishing away at his cheek. "It's acause the skipper there, Capen Cookson's going, as they'd come!"

"Ah! Well, never mind about that," said the doctor, smiling. "So long as I've a good crew going with me, I don't care what induces them."

"But you ain't a-going, sir?" says Abram, looking harder than ever at our owner.

"Indeed, but I am, my man!" replied the doctor. "Why not?"

"Oh, nothing, sir!" says Abram, looking as confused as a great girl, while he stared harder than ever at the doctor.

"Now, what on earth are you thinking about?" said the doctor, making an effort to cross his legs, but failing, on account of the tight fit in the chair.

"Well, sir," says Abram Bostock, slowly,

"meaning no offence, I was a-wishing I were as fat as you are!"

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Scudds. And his one eye rolled tremendously.

"My good friend," exclaimed the doctor, starting up a little way, but subsiding again, for he had raised the chair with him, as if he had been a hermit-crab and it was his shell,—"my good friend, I'd give five thousand pounds to be as thin as you!"

"Hor—hor—hor—hor!" roared Scudds, bursting into a tremendous laugh. "I say, skipper, what a wunner he'd be if we took to the boats!"

"Hush!" I exclaimed.

"What does he mean?" cried the doctor; "that I should sink the boat?"

"No," growled Scudds. "Long pork!"

"Long pork!" said the doctor.

And Abram clapped his hands over his mouth, to stay his laughter.

"Yes," growled Scudds, grinning, and showing a wonderfully white set of teeth; "long pork—long pig—human! Don't you see? You'd keep a boat's crew for a fortnit, if they were hard up and starvin'. Hor—hor—hor—hor!"

"My good man," cried the doctor, shuddering, "that's a very good joke, no doubt, and very funny, only don't make it about me again; try it on somebody else! Such a dreadfully anthropophagistic idea!"

"Which?" growled Scudds.

"Well, then, cannibal idea," said the doctor, shuddering again.

"Lor', sir, I meant no harm," said Scudds.

holding out his great, heavy paw, which the doctor shook. "I've often made it about long, thin, Abram Borstick, there; only when I makes it about him, I allers puts it t'other way, and says he'd *starve* a boat's crew for a fortnit. Don't you see?"

"Oh, yes, I see!" said the doctor, nodding.

"And it's the only joke he ever does make, sir," says Abram.

"Right," growled Scudds.

"I didn't mean no offence, sir, about your going, neither," said Abram, respectfully. "Of course it'll be a great advantage to have a doctor on board. You air a doctor, sir?"

"Yes," said our stout employer, laughing till his cheeks wabbled. "I can cure anything from a frost-bite to a flea-bite; but I'm not an M.D."

"No; of course not, sir," says Abram, nodding his head sagely.

"I mean, sir, not a doctor of medicine."

"Good job, too," growled Scudds. "Yah! I hates physic!" and he looked about for somewhere to spit, ending by opening the room door, and disposing of his tobacco-juice on the mat.

"Well, then, sir," I said, rising, "here are our first and second mates, and I'll get together a crew of sixteen men in a few days, and meet you every morning on board."

"My sarvice to you, sir," said Abram, touching his forehead.

"And mine," growled Scudds.

I was close beside the doctor now, and held the chair as he rose, otherwise he would have lifted it with him. Then we took our leave, and I walked down Hull Street with my two old shipmates.

"Where did you pick up the skipper?" growled Scudds.

"Well," I said, "he's been dodging me about for a week, and been mighty civil, so much so, that I thought he wanted to try the confidence dodge on me, of trusting one another with money; but it's all right, my lads, we've found a good ship and owner, and the pay's good, so we'll sign the articles to-morrow, and get to work."

I needn't tell you all that took place during the next month; how we got coal on board, and stores, and casks for oil, or whatever we might get; had her cabins lined to keep them warm; fitted up stoves; had plenty of extra canvas and spars, ice anchors, a couple of sledges; plenty of ammunition, and provisions enough for two years. Last of all came on board a whole lot of strange-looking mahogany cases, which the doctor had brought very carefully under his own superintendence, and then, one fine morning in June, we steamed out of the Humber, and away we went to the North, with the doctor going about the deck like an active tub, rubbing his hands, and smiling at everybody.

Everything was soon ship-shape; boats ready for work, fur coats and boots served out to the men against they were wanted, and I was very busy one morning getting some of the tackle a little better stowed, when the doctor waddled up to me, and tapped me on the shoulder.

I turned round, and he led the way into the cabin, sat down, and pointed to a seat.

"Now, Captain Cookson," he said, "I think it's time to tell you about my plans."

"If you please, sir," I said, "that is if it suits you."

"Well," he said, "you are now sailing to the North."

"Yes, sir, according to your orders, right away for Spitzbergen."

"And do you know what for?"

"Discovery of some kind, sir, I suppose."

"You are right, Captain; I mean to discover the North Pole."

"With all my heart, sir," I said.

"At least," he said, "I mean to try. If I fail, I shall still be able to make a good many scientific discoveries, so that the voyage won't be for nothing."

"No, sir," I said.

"It has been one of the dreams of my life to go upon a scientific voyage up in the North; but the Admiralty wouldn't listen to me. They had the notion that I was not a suitable man for the expedition; when all the while Nature has expressly designed me for the purpose. See how she has clothed me with adipose tissue."

"With what, sir?"

"Fat, man—fat! like she does the bears, and whales, and Eskimo. While you men will be shivering in your fur coats, I shall be quite warm without. Well, what we have to do is to take advantage of every open channel when we reach the ice, and push forward due North. If the men get discontented, we will keep promising them extra pay, and——What's the matter?"

"Skipper, sir!" growled Scudds, who had just thrust his head in at the cabin door. "Wanted on

deck, sir—reg'lar mutinee. Tom Brown's come up from below, and says as there's a ghost in the hold!"

"Where—where?" cried the doctor, excitedly, as he waddled out of the cabin, thoroughly earning the nickname the men had bestowed upon him of The Penguin. "Captain, get one of the casks ready for a specimen. I have never seen a ghost!"

"Ain't he a rum beggar, skipper?" whispered Scudds, as we followed him on deck, where a knot of the crew were standing round one of the foremast men, Tom Brown, whose face was covered with perspiration, his hair being plastered down upon his forehead.

"Well, where's the ghost, my man?" said the doctor.

"Down in the hold, sir. You can hear him a-groaning!"

The doctor led the way down the open hatch; and I followed, to give him a push down, if he stuck fast, finding that there was something in the man's alarm, for from out of the darkness came, every now and then, a deep, sighing groan.

"Why, there's some one there!" cried the doctor.

"Here, quick, half a dozen of you!" I shouted, for an idea had just struck me; and, getting a lantern, I crept over some of the stores to where stood a row of casks, to one of which I traced the voice.

"Hallo!" I cried, tapping the cask; when there came a rustling noise from inside, and a tap or two seemed given by a hand.

"Found anything?" said the doctor, who had stuck fast between the stores and the deck.

"It's a stowaway, I think," I answered; and,

creeping back, with the groans becoming more frequent, I gave orders, had some of the hatches taken off farther along the deck, and just over where the cask lay; and then, by means of some strong tackle, we hauled the cask out on deck, to find it only partly headed, and from out of it half slipped, half crawled, a pale, thin, ghastly looking young fellow, of about four or five-and-twenty.

"Why, it's Smith!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Water—food!" gasped the poor wretch, lying prostrate on his side.

These were given him, and the doctor added some spirit, with the effect that the poor fellow began to revive, and at last sat up on the deck.

"And how did you get here?" I said.

"Got on board at night!" he gasped. "Crept into the cask—meant to get out—but packed in!"

"Did I not refuse you permission to come, sir?" cried the doctor, shaking his fist.

"Yes, uncle!" gasped the stowaway; "but Fanny said, if I didn't come and take care of you, she—she would never—speak to me—any more! Oh, dear! please stop the ship! I feel so poorly!"

"It's a wonder you were not starved to death," said the doctor.

"Or smothered," I said.

"Ye—yes," stammered the poor fellow. "I was all right till they packed things all round me, and then I couldn't get out!"

"Shall we put the ghost specimen in the spirit cask, doctor?" I said.

"Well, no," he replied. "I think we'll let him go down to the cabin. But you'd no business to come, Alfred, for you'll only be in the way."

"Oh, no, uncle," he said, rapidly getting better, between the qualms produced by the rolling of the steamer; "I shall be a great help to you, uncle. I've brought my Alpenstock, a two-jointed one like a fishing-rod; and—and my ice-boots that I wore in Switzerland."

"Bah!" said the doctor.

"And a climbing-rope."

"Pish!" exclaimed the doctor again.

"And—a pair of snow-shoes."

"Did you bring your skates, sir?"

"No, uncle; Fanny wanted me to, because she said I skated so beautifully; but I knew you had come on business, so I left them behind."

The doctor gave me a fat smile, and I turned round to check Scudds, for fear he should laugh outright; and lucky I did, for he was just getting ready for a tremendous roar, while Abram Bostock held his hands over his mouth.

"Well, get below," said the doctor; "and the sooner you find your sea-legs the better."

So our new member of the exploring expedition crawled below, and we set to and trimmed sails, for the weather was changing, steam being reserved till we wanted it to go through the ice.

We did not get along very fast, for the doctor was always stopping the vessel for something, and the men soon fell in with his whims, and began to enjoy helping him. One day, they would be busy bucketing up water, for him to fill bottles with specimens of whales' food; another time, we tried after a whale with a small gun and a harpoon fired from it, to the great delight of the men. Then we came in sight of the first iceberg, slowly sailing

south, like a fairy castle on a fairy rock, that had broken away from its land in the North, and taken to the sea. The sun was shining upon it, and it was like one grand mass of turrets and spires, glistening with silver, gold, and gems of every color. Here and there, it was split into great openings, with arches over them like bridges; and near the sea were more archways, leading like into caves, and all these places were of the most deep sapphire blue. All was so beautiful, that even the old salts like Abram and Scudds said they had never seen anything like it up North.

Of course, the doctor couldn't pass it without landing; and as there were some seals and a few birds sitting on the farther side, I ran the steamer close in, till, in the still water on the lee, we were able to bring her close alongside of what was just like a natural wharf of ice; when Scudds and four more got on the berg, a couple of ice-anchors were passed over to them, and soon after we were made fast, and the doctor took a gun, his nephew followed, and we had a good climb along the wonderful sides of the iceberg.

"If we could only get on the top I wouldn't mind," said the doctor, after making half a dozen tries; but every one was a failure, for it was for all the world like climbing the side of a slippery board.

"Suppose you did get up, sir—what then?" I said.

"What then, Captain Cookson? Why, I could take observations; notice the structure of the ice; chip off specimens; but I suppose I must be disappointed."

But he was not, for when toward evening we were sitting on deck, I said to him, "I suppose we may cast loose now, doctor, and get on!" there suddenly came a strange scraping noise, and a peculiar motion of the ship.

"Cut away those ice-cables!" I roared, running to get an axe, for I scented the danger.

But I was too late, and stopped paralyzed, holding on by one of the shrouds! for I suddenly woke to the fact that in going close in to the visible part of the iceberg, we had sailed in over a part of it that was under water, and now the huge mass of ice having grown top-heavy, it was slowly rolling over, but fortunately away from us, though the result seemed to threaten destruction.

Almost before I knew where I was, the steamer began to sway over to starboard; then I saw that we were lifted out of the water; and as the men gave a cry of horror, we rose higher, and higher, and higher, as the great berg rolled slowly over till we were quite a couple of hundred feet in the air, perched on almost an even keel in a narrow V-marked valley, with the ice rising as high as the main yard on either side, and the little valley we were in running steeply down to the sea.

We all remained speechless, clinging to that which was nearest, and the motion made the doctor's nephew exceedingly ill; but as for the doctor, he was standing note-book in hand, exclaiming, "Wonderful! Magnificent! Captain, I would not have missed such a phenomenon for the world!"

"Other world, you mean, sir!" I said, with a gasp of horror. "We shall never reach home again!"

"Nonsense, man," he said. "Why, this ice will melt in less than a month, and let us down."

"Or turn over the other way, and finish us off, sir!" I said, gloomily.

"Meanwhile, captain, I am up on the top of the iceberg, and can make my meteorological observations. Alfred, bring me the glaceoscope. Hang the fellow, he's always poorly when I want him. Captain, will you oblige?"

I stood staring at him for a few moments, astonished at his coolness.

"The long brass instrument," he said, "out of the case numbered four, in the cabin."

I went and fetched the instrument, the men looking as much astounded as I was myself to see the doctor going coolly to work examining the structure of the ice, with its curious water-worn face. Then he seemed to be making measurements, and he ended by coming to us, rubbing his hands.

"Curious position, isn't it!" he said, laughing. "By the way, captain, I should cast off those ice anchors, in case the iceberg should make another turn. They might be the cause of mischief."

"Cause of mischief! Hark at him!" said Abram. "When we're perched two hundred foot up here in the air! Come on, lads."

The ice anchors were taken out of the holes that had been cut for them, and were got on board as we settled down for the night, no man feeling disposed to sleep; and all this while we were drifting slowly with the stream farther and farther south.

This went on for four days, and then, one night, I remember thinking, as I lay on deck, that could we be sure of the ice melting slowly at the top, and

letting us down, we should be safe; but I knew that the bottom melted faster in the warm water, then the top grew heavier, and over it went again.

I tried very hard to keep awake in case of danger; but it was of no use, for I was worn out with watching, and at last I went off soundly to sleep, dreaming that I was drowned, and living in an ice cave, fish fashion, at the bottom of the sea, when I was awakened by Scudds, who shook me, crying, "Wake up, skipper! she's a-going to launch herself!"

I jumped to my feet, to find the doctor on deck, lecturing his nephew about the launching of ships, and pointing out the gradual slope down of the ice valley in which we lay.

"She's shifted two foot!" said Scudds. "I felt her move!"

"Batten down the hatches!" I roared, seeing what was coming; and as soon as this was done, and the ship made water-tight, I gave fresh orders for every man to lash himself fast to the shrouds and belaying-pins, while I myself secured the doctor and his nephew, neither of them seeing the slightest danger in what was to come.

Hardly had I done this, than there was a strange creaking, scratching noise, as of iron passing over ice; and then we felt that the vessel was in motion, gilding down the horrible precipice toward the sea.

At first she moved very slowly, but gathering speed, she glided faster and faster, till, with a rush like an avalanche, she darted down the great ice slide, stem first, till, at the bottom, where the iceberg ended abruptly in a precipice forty or fifty

feet high, she shot right off, plunging her bowsprit the next instant in the water, and then all was darkness.

The sensation of the slide down was not unpleasant; the rush through the air was even agreeable; but to dart down into the depths of the ocean like some mighty whale, was awful. There was a strange roaring and singing in the ears; a feeling of oppression, as if miles of water were over one's head; a sense of going down, down, down into the depths that were like ink; and then, by degrees, all grew lighter and lighter, till, with a dart like a diving-bird, the stout iron steamer sprang to the surface, rolled for a minute or two with the water streaming from her scuppers, and then floated easily on the sea, with the iceberg half a mile astern.

"Bravo!—bravo, captain! Capitally done!" cried the doctor. "As fine a bit of seamanship as ever I saw; but you need not have made us so wet!"

"Thanky, sir!" I said, for I was so taken aback and surprised that I didn't know what to say, the more so that Abram Bostock, Scudds, and the rest of them took their tone from the doctor, nodded their heads, and said, "Very well done, indeed!"

I didn't believe it at first, till I had had the pump well sounded; but the ship was quite right, and as sound as ever, so that half an hour after we had made sail, and were leaving the iceberg far behind.

It was some time before I could feel sure that it wasn't all a dream; but the cool way in which the doctor took it all served to satisfy me, and I soon

had enough to take up my attention in the management of the ship.

For the next fortnight we were sailing or steaming on past floating ice, with the greatest care needed to avoid collision or being run down. Then we had foul weather, rain, and fog, and snowstorm, and the season seeming to get colder and colder for quite another fortnight, when it suddenly changed, and we had bright skies, constant sunshine night and day, and steamed slowly on through the pack ice.

The doctor grew more confidential as we got on, telling me of the jealousy with which he had watched the discoveries of other men, and how, for years, he had determined that Curley and Pole should be linked together. He said that there was no doubt about the open Polar Sea, and that if we could once get through the pack ice into it, the rest of the task was easy.

"But suppose, when we've got up there, we get frozen in, doctor?" I said.

"Well, what then?" he answered. "We can wait till we are thawed out."

"Perhaps all dead," I said.

"Pooh, my dear sir! No such thing. Freezing merely means a suspension of the faculties. I will give you an example soon."

"Well, Binny," said Abram slowly, after overhearing these words, "I don't want my faculties suspended; that's all I've got to say!"

The next day we were working our way through great canals of clear water, that meandered among the pack ice. There were great headlands on each side, covered with ice and snow, and the solitude

seemed to grow awful, but the doctor kept us all busy. Now it was a seal hunt; then we were all off after a bear. Once or twice we had a reindeer hunt, and supplied the ship with fresh meat. Bird shooting, too, and fishing had their turn, so that it was quite a pleasure trip when the difficulties of the navigation left us free.

Eighty degrees had long been passed, and still our progress was not stayed. We often had a bit of a nip from the ice closing in, and over and over again we had to turn back; but we soon found open water again, after steaming gently along the edge of the track, and thence northward once more, till one day the doctor and I took observations, and we found that we were eighty-five degrees north, somewhere about a hundred miles farther than any one had been before.

"We shall do it, Cookson!" cried the doctor, rubbing his hands. "Only five more degrees, my lad, and we have made our fame! Cookson, my boy, you'll be knighted!"

"I hope not, sir!" I said, shuddering, as I thought of the City aldermen. "I would rather be mourned!"

"That's a bad habit, trying to make jokes," he said, gravely. "Fancy, my good fellow, making a pun in eighty-five degrees north latitude! but I'm not surprised. There is no latitude observed now, since burlesques have come into fashion. Where are you going, Cookson!"

"Up in the crow's-nest, sir," I said. "I don't like the look of the hummocky ice out nor'ard."

I climbed up, spy-glass in hand, when, to my horror, the doctor began to follow me.

"That there crow's-nest won't abear you, sir!" cried Scudds, coming to the rescue.

"Think not, my man?" said the doctor.

"Sure on't!" said Scudds.

"Ah, well, I'm with you in spirit, Cookson!" he exclaimed.

And I finished my climb, and well swept the horizon line with my glass.

There was no mistaking it: ice, ice, ice on every side. The little canal through which we were steaming came to an end a mile farther on; and that night we were frozen in fast, and knew that there was not a chance of being set free till the next year.

The crew was divided into two parties at once, and without loss of time I got one set at work lowering yards, striking masts, and covering in the ship, while the others were busied with the preparation of the sledges.

Two days after, a party of ten of us, with plenty of provisions on our sledge, and a tent, started under the doctor's guidance for the Pole.

It was very cold, but the sun shone brightly, and we trudged on, the doctor showing the value of his natural covering, though he was less coated with furs than we were.

He pointed out to me the shape of the land, and which was frozen sea; and at the end of two days, when we were in a wild place, all mighty masses of ice, he declared his conviction that there was, after all, no open Polar sea, only ice to the end.

We had had a bitter cold night, and had risen the next morning cold and cheerless; but a good hot cup of coffee set us right, and we were thinking

of starting, when Scudds, who was with us, Abram being left in command, kicked at a piece of ice, saying, "That's rum-looking stuff!"

"There's something in it," said the doctor's nephew, who was always in the way.

"Let me see," said the doctor, putting on his spectacles. "To be sure—yes! Axes, quick!"

He took one himself, gave the block of ice a sharp blow, split it in halves, and, to our utter astonishment, a strange-looking animal like a woolly dog lay before us, frozen, of course, perfectly hard.

"A prize!" said the doctor; and we, under his orders, made a good-sized fire, laid the perfectly preserved animal by it, and at the end of a couple of hours had the satisfaction of seeing it move one leg, then another, and, at last, it rose slowly on all fours, raised one of its hind legs, scratched itself in the most natural way in the world, and then seemed to sink down all of a heap, and melt quite away, leaving some loose wool on the snow.

"Well," said Scudds, rolling his one eye, "if I hadn't ha' seen that 'ere, I wouldn't ha' believed it!"

"Only a case of suspended animation, my man," said the doctor, calmly. "We shall make more discoveries yet."

The doctor was right; for this set all the men hunting about, he giving them every encouragement, so that at the end of an hour we had found another dog; but in dislodging the block of ice in which it was frozen, the head was broken off, so that the only good to be obtained by thawing it was the rough wool and some of the teeth, which the doctor carefully preserved.

"Isn't it much colder here, doctor?" I said, for the wind seemed to go through me like a knife.

"Hush!" he whispered; "don't let the men hear, or they'll be discouraged. It's perfectly frightful; the thermometers are stopped!"

"Stopped?" I said.

"Yes; the cold's far below anything they can show. They are perfectly useless now. Let's get on!"

I stood staring at him, feeling a strange stupor coming over me. It was not unpleasant, being something like the minutes before one goes to sleep; but I was startled into life by the doctor flying at me, and hitting me right in my chest. The next moment he had a man on each side pumping my arms up and down, as they forced me to run for quite a quarter of an hour, when I stopped, panting, and the doctor laid his hand upon my heart.

"He'll do now!" he said, quietly. "Don't you get trying any of those games again, captain."

"What games?" I said, indignantly.

"Getting yourself frozen. Now, then, get on, my lads—we must go ahead!"

For the next nine days we trudged on, dragging our sledge through the wonderful wilderness of ice and snow. At night we camped in the broad sunshine, and somehow the air seemed to be much warmer. But on the tenth day, when we had reached the edge of a great, crater-like depression in the ice, which seemed to extend as far as the eye could reach, the intensity of the cold was frightful, and I spoke of it to the doctor, as soon as we had set up our little canvas and skin tent.

"Yes, it is cold!" he said. "I'd give something

to know how low it is! But let's make our observations."

We did, and the doctor triumphantly announced that we were within one degree of the Pole.

We were interrupted by an outcry among the men, and, on going to the tent, it was to find them staring at the spirit-lamp, over which we heated our coffee. The flame, instead of fluttering about, and sending out warmth, had turned quite solid, and was like a great tongue of bright, bluish-yellow metal, which rang like a bell, on being touched with a spoon.

"Never mind, my men!" says the doctor coolly. "It is only one of the phenomena of the place. Captain, give the men a piece of brandy each."

"A little brandy apiece, you mean, sir."

"No," he said coolly; "I mean a piece of brandy each."

He was quite right: the brandy was one solid mass, like a great cairngorm pebble, and we had to break it with an axe; and very delicious the bits were to suck, but as to strength, it seemed to have none.

We had an accident that evening, and broke one of the doctor's thermometers, the ball of quicksilver falling heavily on the ice, and, when I picked it up, it was like a leaden bullet, quite hard, so that we fired it at a bear, which came near us; but it only quickened his steps.

In spite of the tremendous cold, we none of us seemed much the worse, and joined the doctor in his hunt for curiosities. There was land here as well as ice, although it was covered; for there was on one side of the hollow quite a hill, and the doc-

tor pointed out to me the trace of what he said had been a river, evidently emptying itself into the great crater; but when he pulled out the compass to see in which direction the river must have run, the needle pointed all sorts of ways, ending by dipping down, and remaining motionless.

We were not long in finding that animal life had at one time existed here; for, on hunting among the blocks of ice, we found several in which we could trace curious-looking beasts, frozen in like fossils.

We had set up our tent under the lee of a great rock of ice, on the edge of the crater, which looked so smooth and so easy of ascent, that it was with the greatest difficulty that we could keep the doctor's nephew from trying a slide down. He had, in fact, got hold of a smooth piece of ice to use as a sledge, when the doctor stopped him, and put an end to his enthusiasm by pointing down and asking him what was below in the distance, where the hollow grew deep and dark, and a strange mist hung over it like a cloud.

"If you go down, Alfred, my boy, you will never get back. Think of my misery in such a case, knowing that you have, perhaps, penetrated the mystery of the North Pole, and that it will never be known!"

The young fellow sighed at this arrest of his project.

Just then we were roused by a shout from Scudds, whom we could see in the distance, standing like a bear on its hind legs, and moving his hands.

We all set off to him, under the impression that

he had found the Pole; but he was only standing pointing to a great slab of transparent ice, out of which stuck about ten inches of the tail of something, the ice having melted from it; while, on closer examination, we could see, farther in through the clear, glassy ice, the hind-quarters of some mighty beast.

"A mammoth—*Elephas Primigenius!*" cried the doctor, excitedly. "We must have him out."

We stared at one another, while the doctor wabbled round to the other side of the great mass, where he set up a shout; and, on going to him, there he was, pointing to what looked like a couple of pegs about seven feet apart, sticking out of the face of the ice.

"What's them, sir?" says one of the men.

"Tusks!" cried the doctor, delightedly. "My men, this is as good as discovering the North Pole. If we could get that huge beast out, and restore his animation, what a triumph. Why, he must have been," he said, pacing the length of the block, and calculating its height, "at least—dear me, yes—forty feet long, and twenty feet high."

"What a whopper!" growled Scudds. "Well, I found him."

"We must have him out, my men," said the doctor again, but he said it dubiously, for it seemed a task beyond us, for fire would not burn, and there was no means of getting heat to melt the vast mass; so at last we returned to the camp, and made ourselves snug for the night.

In the morning, the doctor had another inspection of the mammoth, and left it with a sigh; but in the course of the day we found traces of dozens

of the great beasts, besides the remains of other great creatures that must have been frozen-in hundreds or thousands of years before; and the place being so wonderfully interesting, the doctor determined to stay there for a few days.

The first thing, under the circumstances, was to clear the snow away, bank it up round us, and set up the tent in the clear place under the shelter of the big mammoth block.

We all went at it heartily, and as we scraped the snow off, it was to find the ice beneath as clear as glass.

"Ah!" said the doctor, sitting down and looking on, after feeling the mammoth's tail, knife in hand, as if longing to cut it off, "it's a wonderful privilege, my lads, to come up here into a part of the earth where the foot of man has never trod before!——Eh! what is it?" he cried, for his nephew suddenly gave a howl of dread, dropped the scraper he had been using, jumped over the snow heap, and ran off.

"What's he found?" said Scudds, crossing to the place where the young man had been busy scraping, and staring down into the ice. "Any one would think——Oh, lor'!"

He jumped up, and ran away, too, and so did another sailor; when the doctor and I went up to the spot, looked down, and were very nearly following the example set us, for there, only a few inches from us, as if lying in a glass coffin, was a man on his back, with every feature perfect, and eyes wide open, staring straight at us!

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Then some one has been here before?" I said.

"The ice must have drifted up," said the doctor. "We are the only men who have penetrated so far. Quick, my lads; we must have him out!"

The boys didn't like the task, and Scudds was almost mutinous; but the doctor soon had us at work, cutting a groove all round the figure; and, after about five hours' chipping, we got out the great block with the figure inside perfect, and laid it down in the sun, which now exercised such power in the middle of the day that the ice began to thaw, just as we awoke to the fact that the cold was nothing like so intense, for the spirit lamp on being tried burned freely, and the brandy, instead of being like rock, showed signs of melting.

At first the men held aloof from the operation; but after a few words from the doctor, Scudds suddenly exclaimed, "No one shall say as I'm afraid of him!"—and he rolled his eye wonderfully as he helped to pour hot water over the figure, which, far from being ghastly as the ice grew thinner, looked for all the world like one of our own men lying down.

In about twelve hours we had got all the ice clear away, and the fur clothes in which the body was wrapped were quite soft. We were then so tired, that, it being night, the doctor had the figure well wrapped up in a couple of buffalo robes, and, in spite of a good deal of opposition, placed beside him in the tent, and we lay down to rest.

I don't know how long we'd been asleep, for, with the sun shining night and day, it bothers you, but I was awoke by somebody sneezing.

"Uncle's got a fine cold!" said young Smith, who was next to me.

"So it seems!" I said; and then there was another sneeze, and another, and another; and when I looked, there was the doctor, sitting up and staring at the figure by his side, which kept on sneezing again and again. Then, to our horror, it sat up and yawned, and threw its arms about.

Every fellow in the little tent was about to get up and run away, when the frozen sailor said, in a sleepy fashion, "Why, it's as cold as ever!"

I tried to speak, but couldn't. The doctor answered him, though, by saying, "How did you get here?"

"Well," said the figure, drowsily, "that means a yarn; and if I warn't so plaguey sleepy, I'd—— Heigho!—ha!—hum!——Well, here goes!"

We sat quite awe-stricken, not a man stirring more than to put a bit of pigtail in his mouth, while the English sailor thus spun his yarn:—

CHAPTER II.

THE ENGLISH SAILOR'S YARN.

You see, I haven't the trick of putting it together, or else, I dare say, I could spin you no end of a yarn out of many a queer thing I've come across, and many a queer thing that's happened to me up and down.

Well, yes, I've been wrecked three times, and I've been aboard when a fire's broken out, and I've seen some fighting—close work some of it, and precious hot; and I *was* once among savages, and there was one that was a kind of a princess among 'em——But there, that's no story, and might happen to any man.

If I were Atlantic Jones now, I could tell you a story worth listening to. Atlantic Jones was made of just the kind of stuff they make heroes out of for story books. He *was* a rum 'un was J. If I could spin a yarn about anything, it ought to be about him, now. I only wish I could.

Why was he called Atlantic? I can't rightly say. I don't think he was christened so. I think it was a name he took himself. It was to pass off the Jones, which was not particularly imposing without the first part for the trade he belonged to. He was a play-actor.

I don't think he had ever done any very great

things at it before I met with him; anyhow, he was rather down on his luck just then, and shabby —well, anything nearer rags, and yet making believe to have an air of gentility about it, I never came across. I don't remember ever having a boot-heel brought so directly under my observation which was so wonderfully trodden down on one side. In a moment of confidence, too, he showed me a hole in the right boot-sole that he had worn benefit cards over, on the inside—some of the unsold ones remaining from his last ticket night.

I was confoundedly hard up myself about that time, having just come ashore from a trip in one of those coffin ships, as they call them now. "Run" they wanted to make out, but it wasn't much of a run, either. The craft was so rotten, there were hardly two planks sticking properly together, and the last man had scarcely got his last leg into the boat, when the whole ricketty rabbit-hutch went down, and only as many bubbles as you could fill a soup-plate with stayed a-top to mark the whereabouts. But the owners wanted to press the charge, and for a while I wanted to lie close, and that's why I came to London, which is a big bag, as it were, where one pea's like another when they're well shaken up in it.

You'll say it was rather like those birds who, when they hear the sportsman coming, dive their heads into the sand, and leave the other three-quarters of them in full view to be shot at, thinking no one else can see it, because they don't happen to be able to see it themselves. You'll say it was like one of them, for me, a sailor, wanting to keep dark from the police, to go skulking about in

waterside taverns and coffee-houses Wapping and Rotherhithe way; well, perhaps it was.

It was at a coffee-house in Wapping I met Atlantic Jones, and he scared me a bit the first time I met him. It wasn't a pretty kind of coffee-house, not one of those you read about in that rare old book, the *Spectator*, where the fops, and dandies, and bloods, "most did congregate," where they "quaffed" and "toasted" in the good old style, which, by the way, must have been somewhat of an expensive old style, and, thank goodness, even some of us third or fourth-raters, nowadays, can spend an odd half-hour or so from time to time very much as the biggest nobs would spend it, though we have but a few silver pieces in our pocket.

To the good old style of coffee-house my fine gentleman, with the brocaded coat-tails, dainty lace ruffles, and big, powdered periwig, would be borne, smoothly (with an occasional jolt or two that went for nothing) in a sedan-chair; and on his arrival there, if it were night-time, would call for his wine, his long pipe, his newspaper, and his wax-candles, and sit solemnly enjoying himself, while humbler folks blinked in the dim obscurity surrounding him, for most likely it was not everybody frequenting the place who could afford to be thus illuminated.

No; this was one of the most ordinary, common, and objectionable kind of coffee-shops, where the most frequent order was for "half a pint and slices;" where the half-pint was something thick and slab, which analytical research might have proved to be artfully compounded of parched peas and chicory, with a slight flavoring of burnt

treacle; while the slices were good old, solemn, stale bread, with an oleaginous superficial surface, applied by a skilled hand, spreading over broader surfaces than scarcely would have seemed credible; so that regular customers, when they wanted to have their joke, would pick up a a slice, and turn it about, and hold it up to the light and put a penny in their right eye, making believe they had got an eye-glass there, and say, "Look here, guv'nor! which side is it? I'm only a arskin' fear it should fall on my Sunday go-to-meeting suit, and grease it."

Rashers of quite unbelievable rancidness, and "nice eggs," in boiling which poultry, in its early promise, was not unfrequently made an untimely end of, were the chief articles of consumption. The newspapers and periodicals—which, somehow, always appeared to be a week old—were marked by innumerable rings, where the customers had stood their coffee-cups upon them, and there were thousands of brisk and lively flies forever buzzing round about the customers' heads and settling on their noses; and thousands more of sleepy flies, stationary on the walls and ceiling, and thickly studding the show rasher in the window; and thousands and thousands more dead flies, lying about everywhere, and turning up as little surprises in the milk jug and the coffee-grounds, on the butter, or under the bacon, when you turned it over.

Not in the eggs, by-the-bye. You were pretty safe from them there—the embryo chick was the worst thing that could happen to you.

Not altogether a nice kind of place to pass one's

evenings in, you are thinking. Well, no; but it was uncommonly quiet, and snug, and uncommonly cheap, which was rather a point with me. I was, in truth, so hard up that night that I had stood outside the window a good twenty mniutes, balancing my last coin—a fourpenny-bit—in my hand, and tossing up, mentally, to decide whether I should spend it in a bed or a supper. I decided on the latter, and entered the coffee-house, where I hoped, after I had eaten, to be able to sleep away an hour or two in peace, if I could get a snug corner to myself.

Several other people, however, seemed to have gone there with something of the same idea, and snored up and down, with their heads comfortably pillowed among the dirty plates and tea-things, while others carried on low, muttered conversations, and one woman was telling an interminable tale, breaking off now and then to whimper.

There was one empty box, in a darkish corner, and I made for that, and ordered my meal—thanking my stars that I had been so lucky as to find such a good place. But I was not left long in undisputed possession of it.

While I was disposing of the very first mouthful the shop-door opened, and a blue-cheeked, anxious-looking man peeped in, as though he were frightened—or, perhaps, ashamed—and glanced eagerly round. Then, as it seemed, finding nothing of a very alarming character, he came a step further in, and stopped again, to have another look, and his eyes fell upon me, and he stared very hard indeed, and came straight to my box, and sat down opposite to me.

I can't say this made me feel particularly comfortable, for, you see, for some days past I had spent the greater part of my time slipping stealthily round corners, and dodging up and down the sneakiest courts and alleys I could come across, with an idea that every lamp-post was a policeman in disguise that had got his eye on me.

I can't say I felt much more comfortable at this stranger's behavior, when he had taken his seat and ordered a cup of coffee and a round of toast, in a low, confidential tone of voice, just, as it struck me, as a detective might have done who had the coffee-shop keeper in his pay. Then he pulled a very mysterious little brown paper-covered book from his pocket, consisting of some twenty pieces of manuscript, and he attentively read in it, and then fixed his eyes upon the ceiling and mumbled.

Said I to myself, "Perhaps this is some poor parson chap, learning up his sermon for next Sunday."

But then this was only Monday night; it could hardly be that.

Presently, too, I noticed that he was secretly taking stock of me round the side of the book. What, after all, if the written sheets of paper contained a minute description of myself and the other runaways who were "wanted"?

He now certainly seemed to be making a comparison between me and something he was reading —summing me up, as it were—and I felt precious uncomfortable, I can tell you.

All at once he spoke.

"It's a chilly evening, sir."

"Yes," I said.

"A sailor, I think?"

There was no good denying that. A sailor looks like a sailor, and nothing else.

"Yes," I said, slowly.

"A fine profession, sir!" said he; "a noble profession. Shiver my timbers!"

Now, you know, we don't shiver our timbers in reality; and if we did, we shouldn't shiver them in the tone of voice the blue-cheeked man shivered his, and I couldn't resist a broad grin, though I still felt uncomfortable.

"I've no objection, I'm sure," said I, "if *you* have none."

He was silent for a while, and seemed to be thinking it over, then went on reading and mumbling. Evidently he was a detective. I had met one before once, dressed as a countryman, and talking Brummagem Yorkshire. A detective wanting to get into conversation with a sailor was just likely, I fancied, to start with an out-of-the-way thing like "shiver my timbers." I made my mind up I wouldn't be pumped very dry.

"Been about the world a good deal, sir, I suppose?" he said, returning to the charge after a brief pause. "Been wrecked, I dare say—often?"

"Pretty often—often enough."

"Have you, now?" he said, laying down his book, and leaning back, to have a good look at me as he drew a long breath. "A—h!"

I went on with my meal, putting the best face I could on it, and pretending not to notice him; but it was not very easy to do this naturally, and at last I dropped my bread and butter, and fixed him, in my turn.

"You ought to know me in time," said I.

"I should be proud to!" he answered, readily. "I should take it as a favor if you'd allow me to make your acquaintance—to become friendly with you!"

"Well," said I, still with the detective idea strong on me, "you see, I like to know whom it is I'm making friends with. What port do you hail from, pray?"

The strange man made a plunge at me, and shook my hand heartily, shaking also the slice of bread and butter I was holding in it.

"Did you take me for a seafaring man?" he asked, in a joyful voice. "You really don't mean that? That's capital!"

"Well," said I, "aren't you?"

"No," he answered, in great excitement; "of course not. I'm going to be very shortly, if I've any luck, but I've not taken to the line yet. See here, sir, that's who I am."

And, so saying, he produced a large illustrated play-bill from his pocket, such as you may find stuck about the walls at the East-end, or on the Surrey side, and on which I read, "The Death Struggle. Enormous success!" in large letters.

"Oh!" I said; "that's you, is it?"

I thought he was, probably, rather cracked.

But he tapped his finger-end emphatically upon one particular spot, and indicated half a line of very small type, and stooping my head so as to bring my eyes down close to it I made out, "Count Randolph, a gambler and a roué, Mr. Jones."

When I had read it, he appeared to look at me, expecting that I should say something appropriate,

or, at any rate, look awe-stricken. But it was very funny to look at this long-faced, hungry-looking fellow, pitching into his buttered toast, and associate him with the wickedness set down to his account, so "Bless me!" was as much as I could possibly manage.

"Yes, it is," said he; "but that's nothing. It's a dirty shame of them to put a fellow in that type, and leave his initial out, too! But that's all jealousy, you know. That's Barkins, that is! It's Barkins's house, and Barkins's bill, and, hang it! it's all Barkins's!"

On referring a second time to the picture-bill, there, sure enough, I found the name of Barkins flourishing in all sorts of type and in all manner of places.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Jones, finishing his coffee with one gulp, "it won't always be so, that's one comfort! I've a chance here, sir,—one of a thousand; and you'll see then whether I'm equal to it or not!"

"I'm sure you will be," I replied, not exactly knowing what else to say. "You find your business rather hard work sometimes, don't you? and the pay sometimes a little doubtful?" I added, after a pause.

"I wish it was *only* a little," Mr. Jones replied, with a woful grin; "but I get along, somehow—I keep alive, somehow; and it won't always be so—not when I get my chance, you know!"

I really thought I ought to say something now, so I asked when he expected the chance, and what it was.

"Ah, that's it!" said he. "Do you know you

could be a good deal of service to me, if you'd the time?"

"I've more time than money, worse luck!" I said. "I should be glad to earn a trifle anyhow, and should be much obliged if you could point out the how; but as to being of service to you, I'd gladly be that for nothing."

You see, I had taken a good look at Mr. Jones's ragged edges and glazed elbows by this time, and had come to the conclusion that, even gambler and roué as he was, he must have had about as much as he could do to look after himself.

I was mistaken. Mr. Jones had influence, though he might be short of cash.

"If you're really hard up," he said, "I can put you onto a kind of job—if you like it. They are doing 'The Battle of Blenheim' at our place. It'll be eighteenpence a night. You'll have to double the armies, and be shot down at the end of every act. But it's all easy enough."

I thought this would suit me very well for the time, and most likely shooting down wasn't permanently injurious to the system any more than being a gambler and a roué; so I thanked him very much.

"But how can I help you in return?" I asked.

"Well, it's to that chance I spoke of," he said, confidentially. "Look here—I've an engagement for a tour down to the Midland counties. The pay isn't very wonderful, to start with; but I'm to have more if we do good business, you know; and I've stipulated that we do a nautical drama, and I play *Jack Brine*—that's the sailor hero, you know—myself."

"What makes you want to play a sailor? I suppose you've done it before, and made a hit?"

"Well—no; I can't say I've ever tried it. But nautical pieces used to be a tremendous go once, and are so still down in some parts of the country, and——There! *I've got it in me,* I'm certain—I feel it here!"

And he tapped the breast of a dilapidated sham sealskin waistcoat as he spoke, and knit his brows with determination.

"But you haven't told me yet how I can be of service to you," said I.

"Well," he said, "look here! This is one of the acts of the piece I'm going to do. I've done it myself—faked it up, you know, pulling in the best bits from one or two others; but that's nothing—and it'll go immense! It's cram-full of business, and the situations are tremendous!"

"It ought to go, if that's the case."

"It's a certainty, dear boy! It can't help it! But there's just one thing about it, do you know, that makes me uncomfortable, and that's where you can help me."

"And that is——"

"You see, I'm not a nautical man myself. It was very odd of you to take me for one right off! Of course, I can put it on pretty well when I like; but if you want the real honest truth, I never even saw the sea in all my life—never been nearer to it than Rosherville; and as I don't happen to be personally acquainted with any nautical men, the fact is I'm not quite certain there is not a screw loose up and down in the words. Of course I'm all right in the shiver my timbers and douse my

pig-tails parts; but it's when you get reefing your jib-boom and hugging the shore with your lee-scrupper that you don't feel altogether as if you'd got your sea legs on. Look here, I'd like to go through the thing with you quietly, and you can tell me where it isn't quite right."

I gladly agreed to render him all the assistance in my power. I thought if there was very much more of the same style he had been quoting there ought to have been a shipwreck or two up and down in that piece of his, and that I should be something like a Captain Boyton's swimming-dress to this poor struggling author over head and ears in a tempestuous ocean of his own manufacture.

I met him by appointment, therefore, next day at the stage door of the theatre where he was acting, and where he had promised to procure me an opening as extra or supernumerary. He got me on easily enough, and my duties, though they made me precious hot, did not require very much genius. I was on my mettle, and wanted to reflect as much credit as possible upon my new friend for the introduction, so I fought away and took forlorn hopes like one o'clock; and the prompter was good enough to say that I evidently had something in me, and would do better presently, if I stuck to it.

After a night or two they found I was an active kind of fellow, and had the full use of my arms and legs, so they introduced a bit of rope climbing on my account, and worked in another bit specially, where I was shot down from among the rigging, with a round of applause every night.

In the daytime, Mr. Jones and I talked the nautical drama, and I set his "lee scuppers" right for

him, and got him to make things generally a little bit more like the right thing.

At the end of a fortnight, however, I was able to get at my friends, and through them to stop the mouths of the angry coffin-ship owners; and so I had no more occasion to fight shy of the seaports, and resolved to go to sea again.

If it had not been for that, Mr. Jones would have tried to get me into the company he was just then joining, and I should have figured in one or two small parts in the great drama.

However, instead of that, I bid him good-by, and thanked him, and wished him every success, and went my way, leaving him to go his.

. . . . .

I only went for a short cruise round the coast of Spain, but I met with the pleasantest mates—bar present company, of course—I ever remember sailing with. We all of us got to be like brothers before the ship touched land again in England, and as another vessel was in want of hands, and about to sail in two or three days for the China Sea, I and five others agreed to stick together and join. I took two days just to drop down and see my friends, and the next day we met together and had a bit of a spree, agreeing to spend our last night at the play. I had told my messmates about Jones, and how I had been on the stage myself, so they looked up to me as rather an authority, as you may suppose, and passing me over the play-bill the waiter had brought us, asked if I knew anything of the piece they were playing.

Know anything, indeed!

Ha! ha! That was not bad.

Why, it was Jones's piece, and ATLANTIC JONES, in great letters, was to appear in his great character of *Jack Brine*, the Bo's'en of the Bay of Biscay.

Of course we went. We were there for that matter a good hour before there was any absolute necessity, and stood waiting at the doors. There weren't many other people waiting there, by the way. There was one small boy, if I remember right. Not another soul; and at first we weren't quite sure we had not mistaken the night. However, that was not so. The doors did open a few minutes late, and then we made a rush in all at once, paying a shilling and sixpence each all round for seats in the dress circle.

After we'd been there some little time, and the small boy had been the same time in the last seat in the pit, from which he stared up at us with his eyes and mouth wide open, we caught sight of some one peeping in a frightened kind of way round the curtain. It was Jones, and we all gave him a cheer to encourage him, and let him know we had rallied round.

He didn't seem encouraged, but ran away again; and the money-taker, having plenty of spare time on his hands, as it seemed, came and told us to keep steady if we wanted to stop where we were.

My mates were, some of them, inclined to run rusty at the advice, for we'd done no more than make things look a bit cheerful under rather depressing circumstances, only we would not have a row with him, for Jones's sake. After a while, one or two more people dropped in, up and down,

and we were, maybe, thirty in all, when the curtain went up at last, and business began in earnest.

I've spent a good many roughish nights, and suffered a tidy lot in 'em, but I wouldn't engage under a trifle for another such night as that was. I pitied poor Jones from the bottom of my heart.

You see, he was a well-meaning kind of fellow, but there wasn't a great deal of him, and he hadn't all the voice he might have had; and when he sang out as loud as he could, but rather squeaky, "Avast there, you land-lubbers, or I'll let daylight into you!" some one said, "Don't hurt 'em, sir; they mightn't like it!"

About the end of the second act he began to show signs of being dead beat, and I sent him round a pot of stout to help him on, for I regularly felt for him. We applauded all we could, too. The pit ceiling was a sufferer that night, so I don't deceive you; but it was no good. No one else applauded a bit. Some of them hissed. Indeed, if it had not been for my mates being my mates, and sticking to me and Jones, as in duty bound, I believe they'd have hissed, too. As it was, when the act-drop fell, and we all went out for a liquor, they weren't over-anxious to come back again, only they did, of course.

The last act was very cruel. I think the stout had got into Jones's head, and into his legs, too; for he was all over the stage, and, we fancied, half his time, didn't know what he was up to. Then came the great situation, where he was to board the pirate schooner single-handed, and rescue his lady-love—and, in the name of everything that is

awfully dreadful, what do you think happened to Jones then?

It might have been something wrong in the scenery, or it might have been something wrong with Jones, but he appeared on the upper deck of the pirate boat, and was going to jump down on the lower deck, flourishing a cutlass, when he somehow slipped, and caught behind.

I shall never forget it. He caught somehow by the trousers, and hung there, dangling like an old coat on a peg. Then he tore himself loose with a great wrench, while every one in the house was screaming with laughter, and rushed off the stage.

We took poor Jones away that night, and we liquored him up a lot, and he wept as he told us what he had gone through, and somehow we couldn't laugh much as we listened to him.

I don't know how it happened. I think he said he would go on board with us, and have a final glass, and he was to come back in a boat that had taken some goods on board from the shore. I don't know how it was, I say; but six hours after we had got fairly out to sea, some one found a pair of legs sticking out from behind something, and at the end of these legs were Jones's head and body.

When we had shaken him out of a dead sleep, he asked to be put on shore at once, and talked wildly of bringing an action against the skipper. But the skipper put it to Jones in a jocular kind of way, that the general practice was to keel-haul stowaways, when you felt inclined to treat them kindly, or heave them overboard with a shot tied to their heels, if you didn't; so Jones calmed down

after a while, and made up his mind to go to China with us quietly, and make no more fuss about it.

I don't think a man on board wanted to act unkindly to poor Jones; and, 'pon my soul, I'd not have sat by quietly and seen it. But Jones tempted Providence, as it were, and was the unluckiest beggar alive.

To begin with, I never knew a man so sea-sick that it didn't kill right off. I never knew a man with more unreliable legs on him; so that there was no saying where he'd be to a dozen yards or so when he once started. And he fell overboard twice. So all this made him rather a laughing-stock among the regular hands. But he was so good-natured, and stood the chaff so good-humoredly, that we got all of us to take a mighty fancy to his company.

Poking fun upon one subject only he did not take to kindly, and that was the famous *Jack Brine* impersonation, which we presently found out, very much to our surprise, he looked upon as little short of perfection.

"I don't regret this affair altogether," said he, one day. "You see, all I want is actual experience of the perils of the ocean."

Before long he had them, too.

The reason why we had been required to join in such a hurry was that several of the foreign sailors had run at the last moment, and there was a great difficulty in obtaining any Englishmen willing to sail with them. With the exception of the skipper, we six sailors, and Atlantic Jones, the rest were all Lascars—savage, sneaking, bloodthirsty wretches, that there was no trusting a moment

out of your sight. I had never before made a voyage with that kind of company, and, if I can help it, never will again. However, we felt no particular uneasiness about them. Any one of us, we simply consoled ourselves by reflecting, could quite easily thrash half a dozen of the foreign beggars in a fair fight. The worst of it was, though, when the fight did come, it was not a fair one.

I began by telling you that I was a bad story-teller; I must finish by telling you so again. And after all, what story have I left to tell, which would not be to you, sailors like myself, a thrice-told tale? It came about, in the usual way, with a night surprise. I woke up with a man's hand tightening on my throat, with a gleaming knife before my eyes. Then—thud! thud!—it came down on me, through the thick blankets I had twisted round me. Lucky for me they were so thick!

This was all I saw; then the light was knocked out, and I heard the black wretch's naked feet pattering on the steps, as he went up swiftly to the deck above, then a deep groan from the bunk of one of my old messmates—it was one called Adams.

I was horribly cut about, and bleeding fast; but I managed to creep out, and feel through the darkness. I came, just within a few feet, upon a man's body, stretched out, lying on its face. Though it was dark as pitch, I had no need to touch it twice to know that it was a dead body. Then I got to Adams, and called him by name.

He answered faintly, "Yes!"

I asked him where the crew were, and whether he knew what had happened.

They were all killed, he thought, and the Lascars had got the vessel in their hands.

We were doubtless supposed to be murdered, too. It must have all been done very quickly. Adams had heard no sound from the deck above, and I had heard none.

The crippled condition in which we were, and the darkness, rendered us almost entirely helpless; but I managed somehow—partly on my feet, partly on my hands and knees—to crawl up the ladder. The hatchway was closed above me. We were prisoners.

I could from this place make out that a wild debauch was going on on the after-deck, and I heard one of the scoundrels shrieking out a song, in a wild, discordant voice. They had broken open the stores, and were getting mad drunk with rum.

I crawled back to tell the news, and to think what could be done.

Adams was almost fainting from loss of blood. For myself, I was scarcely good for anything—not for a struggle, that was certain. I might defend myself for a time. I would try, anyhow. I could only die.

All at once we heard the hatchway opening stealthily.

"Whist!" said Jones's voice. "Who's alive down there?"

"Two!" I answered. "Adams and I—Tom Watson. We are both badly wounded."

"Thank heaven you are not dead!" he said. "You can save yourselves, if you've strength enough to lower yourselves into a boat. I've got it down into the water. Will you try?"

"WE COULD SEE THE DARK FIGURES OF THE REST IN THE SEMI-DARKNESS."

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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We went at once, and gained the deck. Only one of the villains was on the watch forward. We could see the dark figures of the rest sprawling about in the semi-darkness far aft, and we went down on our hands and knees, and crawled in the shadow to the side. But just as we reached it, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and the man fired, and shouted loudly.

Adams went down, and we two only were left.

"Save yourself! Jump!" cried Jones. "I'll keep 'em back! Avast there, you black-hearted swabs, or I'll chop you to pieces!" And as five of them, the soberest of the lot, came rushing on us in a body, he laid about him right and left with a large cutlass, much heavier than I should have believed he could use, and the beggars rolled over, slashed and mangled beneath his strokes.

I never before or since have seen a man fight like Atlantic Jones did then. Stripped to the waist, his long hair flying in the wind, his hands red with blood, his body bespattered, too, he looked more like a fiend than a human being, much less a very bad play-actor; but all the while he fought he never once ceased yelling out the silly gibberish he thought was sailors' talk.

They fell back at last enough to allow us to reach the boat, and we pushed off. They fired on us then, furiously, and I did all I could to make Jones lie down, to be out of harm's way, but he would not—continuing to yell defiance and wave his cutlass. Those left alive were too drunk, fortunately for us, to make any decisive effort to stop us; and we drifted away, for the oars had fallen into the water.

This would be a longer tale—and it's long enough now, I'm sure—if I were to tell you what we suffered those four days we drifted in the open sea. Then, more dead than alive, I was taken on board a passing ship; and Jones, who had tended me the while with every possible care, though his own sufferings were at times intense, nursed me through a long illness.

. . . . .

I told you I never could tell a tale. My tale ought to have begun where it's left off, pretty nearly.

. . . . .

The last time I saw Jones he was at his play-acting again at the Hull Theatre. He was a sailor once more, and had a deuce of a set-to with some Lascars. But the audience didn't seem to think much of it. They goosed him, and shied orange-peel.

Very low-spirited he was, poor chap, when I met him at the stage-door afterwards, and he didn't cheer up much when I stood some beer.

Next day I picked up with a skipper, and got off on a whaling voyage. Rare game it was, ketching the big fish, I can tell you, only one day they put me ashore on an iceberg to pick a hole for an ice-anchor, so as to get the ship on the lee when it came on to blow.

I didn't take no notice though, but kept on picking away, till all at once there came on such a fog that I could hardly see my boots.

That there fog lasted three days, and when it

was gone, there was no ship nowhere, and the iceberg drifting away doo north as hard as ever it could go.

I wouldn't ha' cared if it hadn't been so cold, for I got plenty of seals and sea-birds, snaring 'em when they was asleep; but the cold was awful, and when we got stuck fast—froze up at last—I was glad to get a good run over the solid ice, which I did till I came to the edge of a big basin, like, where I lay down, tired out, and dropped off to sleep. You've just come, I suppose?

The doctor nodded.

"Ah! and it's as cold as ever," said the English sailor. "Now, if Atlantic Jones—Heigh—was—ho—here—hum! Well, I am sleepy. Got a tot of grog, mates?"

The doctor reached out his hand for the case-bottle; but, as he did so, there seemed to be a mist come on suddenly where the English sailor sat; and, when it cleared away, there was a lot of moisture freezing hard, an empty tobacco-box, and the rusty blade of a knife.

"As-tonishing!" said the doctor. "Suspended animation!"

"But where's he gone now?" I says.

"Into his original constituents," said the doctor; and our fellows all shuffled out of the tent, with their fur caps lifted up by their hair, and wouldn't go in again; so we had to move the bit of a camp farther up along the edge of the big basin, and scrape and clear the snow off the transparent ice—where, hang me! if there wasn't another fellow a few inches down.

"Yes," says the doctor; "this place is full of

relics of the past, and if we searched we should find hundreds. Get him out!"

"But what's the good?" growled Scudds, "if they on'y melts away again?"

"We must do it for scientific reasons," says the doctor. "Out with him, men!"

There was no help for it, so at it we went; and now our chaps got over some of their scared feelings, all but the doctor's nevvy, who did nothing but shiver, and nearly jumped out of his ice-boots, when, after thawing, the rough figure we had got out of the ice sat up suddenly, and exclaimed—

"An' did somebody say how did I get here?"

"We thought it," said the doctor.

"Bedad! I heard ye," said the figure. "Give's a taste of rum, which is the best makeshift for poteen, and I'll tell ye. But it's very cowld."

He cowered close over the lamp, trying to warm his hands; and I noticed that when they handed him some rum, he put it down by his side, going on talking like to the lamp, as he spun away at his story.

CHAPTER III.

THE IRISH SAILOR'S YARN.

"The Ghost on Boord Ship."

I HAVE followed the say, man and boy, any time these thirty years and more; and sure it's but little I have to tell you about that same in the way of short commons, long voyages, mishaps, and shipwrecks that would be interesting to you, seeing that, in all rasonable probability, you have all of you had your fair share of the like.

However, maybe I can spin you a short yarn about what every one of you hasn't seen, and that is a "ghost on boord ship."

"A ghost on board ship!" chorused the sailors, turning eagerly toward the speaker.

Bedad, ye may say that, and as fine a ghost as ever mortial man set eyes upon.

You must know I was always partial to the say, and first tried my hand at a sailor's life wid a cousin of my mother's, who had a small sloop he used for fishing along the coast off the Cove of Cork.

It was on boord the little *Shamrock* I got my say-legs, and, by the same token, many a sharp rope's-ending into the bargain.

I had plinty to ate, and plinty to drink, and plinty of hard work, too, as there were but three

hands on boord—my cousin, one man, and myself, making up the entire crew.

I was well enough trated, and had no rason to complain.

The sloop was a fast sailer, and a good say-boat, and I ought to have been continted—but somehow it's myself that wasn't satisfied at all at all.

I never saw the tall masts of the big ships that traded to furrin parts that I didn't long to clamber up their sides, and see if I couldn't get a berth—anything, from captain to cabin-boy, I wasn't particular—on boord one of them.

One fine day, when the little sloop was high and dry, my cousin stepp'd into a shebeen to get a taste of the mountain dew, and give me what he called my share, which was a dale more pewter than whiskey—for it's mighty little of the latter was left in the measure whin he handed it to me; when a tall, spare, good-looking sort of a chap enough, with lashings of bright brass buttons on his coat and waistcoat, and a smart goold band round his peaked cap, who happened to be taking his morning's refreshment at the same time, said to my cousin as he emptied his naggin, "Fill that," says he, "onct more,—fill that, and drink wid *me*."

"Never say it again," says my cousin. "Fill and drink's the word *this* time with *you*, and the *next* with *me*, honest man!"

"All right!" replied the stranger.

And fill and drink it was more than onct round, you may be on your oath.

"That's a smart youngster!" says he wid the band and buttons, pointing to me.

"The boy's well enough, as a boy," says my

cousin. "He's strong, handy, and willing, and not the sort of a lad to kape where there's an empty larder; but if he ates well, he works well; so more power to his elbow, and double rations, wid all my heart!"

"That's the lad for my money!" says the stranger. "Would you like to take a trip with me, youngster?"

"What ship do you belong to, sir?" I asked.

"That," says he, going to the door of the public, and pointing to a splindid three-master, with the stars and stripes at the peak.

"And where do you sail to, sir?" says I.

"New York," replied he.

"Where's that, if it's plasin' to you, sir?" says I.

"In Amerikay," says he; "the land of the brave, and the home of the free!"

"Amerikay!" broke in my cousin. "My sister's wife's uncle has a son there—a tall young man, badly pock-marked, with a slight cast in his left eye, and hair as red as a fox. Lanty O'Gorman is the name he has upon him. He has been there two years and better. Mayhap you have met him?"

"I dar say I have," said the stranger, laughing heartily.

"Would you take a message to him, sir?" asked my cousin.

"I'd be everlastingly delighted," says he, "but there's a dale of O'Gormans about; and as most of them are pock-marked, squint, and have red heads, I'm afraid I'd be bothered to know him. Do you think that young shaver would remimber him?"

"Faith and troth I would, sir," says I, "by ra-

son of the leathering he gave me onct for making an April fool of him, telling him the chickens the ould hen had hatched from the ducks' eggs had tuck to the water, and if he didn't hurry and get them out of the pond, every mother's son of them would be drownded!"

"Wal," said the stranger, "it's an almighty pity you ain't there to see him. The man I know of the name of O'Gorman is as rich as mud; and if he took a liking to you, he could make your fortune right off the reel in less than no time!"

"I'd give the worrild to go," says I.

"Come, old man," says the Yankee—I found out afterward he was an Amerikan—"what do you say? Will you let this young shaver take a trip with me? He shall be well cared for under the stars and stripes. I'll give him fair pay and good usage. Fact is, I am in want of a smart lad, who has got his say-legs, to wait upon myself and a few extra cabin passengers. I like the cut of the boy's jib, so say yes or no—how is it to be? It will be for the lad's good?"

"Arrah, good luck to ye, cousin, darlint, let me go! It has been the wish of my heart, slapin' and wakin', this many a long day! Let me go, and sorra a rap I'll spind of the lashings of goold Cousin Lanty will give me, but bring every pinny home safe and sound, just as he puts it into my hand!"

"You offer fair and honest," says my cousin. "It's true for you, it would be for the boy's good —far better than his wasting his time dredging and coasting about here; but—what would his mother say?"

"Wal," said the stranger, "I have done a good many pretty considerable difficult things in my time, but as to my being able to tell you what his mother, or any other female woman of the feminine persuasion, would be likely to *say*, my hand won't run to that; so, rather than play the game out, I'll hand in my cards. What I want to know is, what *you* mean to say to it; and you must be smart making up your mind, for the *Brother Jonathan* will trip her anchor bright and early in the morning! Yes, sir-ree!"

To cut the matter short, boys, the Yankee skipper gave my cousin enough in advance to find me in the slops I wanted; and I felt as if I could lep over the moon for joy when I saw the ship's articles signed, and myself rated, at fair wages, as cabin-boy for the outward and return trips.

The ould people lived some twenty miles inland, so there was no chance of seeing them to bid good-by; and maybe that was all for the best, as it wasn't till the hurry and bustle of buying my kit was over, and I got fairly on boord, that the thought of my father and mother, little Norah and Patsey, came across my mind; and when it did, the joy I felt at getting the great wish of my heart gratified—sailing in an elegant three-master—with more people on boord her (she was an emigrant ship) than there was in my own native village, and a dozen besides—turned into unfeigned sorrow at parting from them; and, for the life of me, I couldn't close my eyes all night, because of the scalding hot tears that would force their way from under the lids.

But boys are boys, and sorrow sits lightly on

young hearts; and it's a blessin' it does, for sure we get enough of it when we grow older, and, perhaps, wiser, and better able to bear it!

Faith, it was as much as I could do to wonder at everything I saw on boord the beautiful clipper—for a clipper she was, boys, and could knock off her twelve knots an hour as easy as a bird flies.

The skipper was as good a seaman as ever boxed a compass; the crew, barring the skulkers, were well trated. As for the "ould soldiers," the way *they* got hazed and started was—I must use a Yankee word—a caution!

We made the Battery at New York in a few hours over thirty days.

I got leave to go on shore with the third mate, a mighty dacint young man; and whin I tould him I wanted him to take me to my cousin, by my mother's sister's side, whose name was O'Gorman, with the small-pox, a squint, and a foxey head, I thought he'd taken a seven years' lase of a laugh, and would—unless he split his sides—never do anything else but that same for the rest of his born days.

To cut the matter short, he tould me the skipper had sould me as chape as a speckled orange! So I gave up all hopes of finding my cousin and my fortune; saw as much as I could of the beautiful city; bought a trifle or two to take home; and, after another splendid run, was landed, safe and sound, onct more on the dear ould Cove of Cork.

"Then you saw no ghost in that ship?" says Bostock.

"Faith, I did!"

"But you have told us nothing about it!" says I.

Wait till a while ago. I tuck my wages, and started for the public, where I knew I should find my cousin—and right glad he was to see me; but I couldn't help feeling as if something was wrong by the way he looked and answered me, whin I asked afther the ould people and little Norah and Patsey.

"Take a tumbler of punch, now!" says he; "and we'll talk of that afterward."

"Not at all," says I. "The news, whether good or bad, will go better with the punch; so we'll have them together. How is my darlint mother?"

"Well!" says he.

"And dad?" I inquired.

"Well, too!" says he.

"Thank the Lord for that!" says I. "And the little ones?"

"Happy and hearty!" says he.

"Thanks be to heaven again!" says I. "But what's the matter wid you, at all, man alive?"

"The matter wid me?" said he. "What would be the matter wid me?" said he.

"Sorra a one of me knows!" replied I. "But you look as if you were at a wake widout whiskey!"

"You didn't hear much about what happened at Ballyshevan in Amerikay?" says he.

"Faith, you are right! Not much more than I did about Foxey O'Gorman, wid his squint and red hair!" says I, laughing to think what a fool the skipper had made of me.

"There's nothing to laugh at *here!*" says he. "There's only two things that have been plintiful this sason!"

"Potaties and oats?" says I.

"No such luck!" says he.

"What thin?" I asked.

"*Famine and faver!*" he says pat.

You might have knocked me down wid a Jack-straw, whin I heard those words. I raled back, and if it hadn't been for a binch that was close against the wall, which I clutched a hould of, and managed to bring myself up with, I'd have fallen full length on the floor.

"Have a good sup of this!" says he, handing me his tumbler of punch; "and don't take on so," says he. "You are better off than most of the neighbors! Sure death hasn't knocked at your door; and all you love are living—though they have had a hard time of it—to welcome you back."

"You are right," says I, as I started up, "and the sooner I get that welcome the better. What am I wasting my time here for, at all at all, whin I ought to be there—it's only twenty miles. It's airly yet, I can be home by nightfall. I have promised to return, but I've got three days' lave, so I'm off at onct."

I won't kape you on the road, sure it's longer than ever it seemed; but it came to an end at last. I forgot all my fatigue whin I opened the door, and stepped inside the threshhold; it was between day light and dark—there was no candle burning—but I could see the forms of the four people most dear to me on earth. An involuntary "The Vargin be praised!" broke from my lips.

"My son!—my son!" almost screamed my mother, and if I had been four boys instead of one there wouldn't have been room enough on me for

the kisses they all wanted to give me at the same time.

Whin the first great joy of our meeting was over, I began to ask pardon for quitting ould Ireland widout their lave.

"Don't spake about it, darlint," said my mother; thin, pointing upward, she added, mighty solemn, "Glory be to Him, it was His will, and it was the best day's work ever you did. Tell him what has happened."

"I will," said my father. "You see, Phil, my son, soon after you sailed for Amerikay, the old master died, and the estate came into the hands of his nephew, a wild harum-scarum sort of a chap, that kapes the hoith of company with the quality and rich people in London and Paris, and the lord knows where else besides; but never sets his foot, nor spinds a skurrick here, where the money that pays for his houses, and carriages, and race-horses, and the wine his foine friends drinks—when his tenants is starving—comes from. Seeing how things were likely to go, the ould agent threw up his place rather than rack the tenants any further; this just suited my gintleman, who sent over a new one, a hard man, wid a heart of stone, and he drove the poor craytures as a wolf would drive a flock of shape; they did their best, till their crops failed, to kape their bits of farms; but then—God help them! they were dead bate—sure the famine came, and the famine brought on the faver; they couldn't pay; they were evicted by dozens; and the evictions brought on something worse than the famine or faver—something they hungered and thirsted for more than mate and dhrink."

"What was that, father dear?"

"*Revinge!*" says he.

"Revinge! father—revinge!" I muttered.

"Yis," says he; "but hush! spake low, darlin'! *The boys wint out!* Well, after that, it's little the moon or stars were wanted to light up the night while there was a full barn on the estate.

"The country is overrun by the po-lice and the sojers; but it is small good they have done, or are likely to do. Starving men don't care much for stale or lead; but——"

Here he paused, and raised his hand.

"Hush! there's futsteps on the road, and me talking loud enough to be heard a mile off."

As he spoke, he rose, went stealthily to the door, opened it, and looked out.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, it's naither the peelers nor the sogers, it's frinds that's coming."

As he wint back to his sate, a fine, handsome young fellow brought in a lovely girl, exclaiming, as he entered, "God save all here."

"Amen for that same kindly wish," was our answer.

They were ould frinds and playmates, the son and daughter of two of the snuggest farmers on the estate; and I well knew before I sailed for Amerikay they were engaged to be married.

"I wasn't wrong," said the young man, as he looked hard at me, "it is Phil himself. How's every bit of you? sure it's right glad I am to see you here this blessed night."

"And me, too, Phil," said pretty Mary Sheean, as she took the hand young O'Rourke left free, and shook it warmly.

We sat for, maybe, an hour or more, talking over ould times; and it was with a sad heart I listened to the bad news—for bad enough it was!

O'Rourke tould me the rason of his visit was to let me know he and Mary had made up their minds to sail for Amerikay, where they had some frinds doing well, and it was agreed they would go as steerage passengers with me, three days after date, in the clipper ship, *George Washington.*

As they rose to depart, and were bidding us a kind good-night, a low whistle outside caused us all to start. O'Rourke drew himself up, and compressed his lips tightly, as he listened for a repetition of the signal.

Mary turned deathly pale, and clutched her sweetheart's arm convulsively.

The whistle was repeated.

Miles stooped down, kissed the trembling girl's forehead, and, addressing me, hastily said, "Phil, tired as you must be, I know I can trust to you to see Mary safe home."

"Why not do so yourself?" asked I.

"Because I am called, and must obey."

"Are the boys out to-night?" inquired my father.

"They are, and will be till——"

"When?—where?" demanded my mother.

"No matter," said O'Rourke, "you will know soon enough. Perhaps too soon."

The whistle was heard for the third time. O'Rourke rushed from the cottage, exclaiming, "Heaven guard you all!"

After the lapse of a few minutes, I started with Mary for her father's house. As I left her, look-

ing very sad, at the door, I told her to be sure to see that O'Rourke was not too late to sail wid me.

"Little fear of that," said she; "since his father has been ordered to quit the farm, to make way for a friend of the new agent's, he'll be glad to lave the place forever."

I turned to go home, with a sad heart.

It was the end of harvest-time; the weather was very sultry, and the night cloudy and overcast.

I thought, as I hurried home, we should soon have a heavy thunder-storm, and fancied the summer lightning was more vivid than usual.

Just as I reached my father's door, I was startled by the sudden flashing of a fierce flame in the direction of the mansion of the new heir to the splendid estate he inherited from his uncle.

I doubted for a moment, but then was perfectly sartain the Hall was on fire.

I dashed off at the top of my speed, taking the nearest cut across the fields to the scene of the conflagrashun.

As I was pelting along, I heard the fire-bell sounding from the police barracks, but I got to the place before the sogers or peelers had a chance of reaching it.

A glance convinced me the ould place was doomed; the flames had burst through the lower windows, and were carried by the lattice-work, that reached high above the portico, to the upper story.

While I was looking at the blazing pile, a horseman galloped at full speed up the avenue. Just as he had almost reached the Hall door, and was reining in his horse to dismount, four or five dark figures appeared to spring suddenly out of the

ground, and I heard the report of fire-arms—two distinct shots I could swear to. At the first, one of the party, who sought to intercept the mounted man, fell; at the second, the rider rolled from his saddle heavily to the ground, and then the other figures disappeared as suddenly as they had at first sprung up.

I was so thunderstruck, that for some few minutes I could not stir from the spot.

Seeing no sign of the approach of the military or police, curiosity, or some strong feeling, got the better of my prudence, and I hurried forward to the scene of slaughter, for such in my heart I felt it was—in the case of at least of one of the fallen men. And there, with the lurid light of the burning building flashing across his deathlike face, and the purple blood welling up from a wound in his chest through his cambric shirt-frill, lay, stretched in death, the newly appointed agent, and, close beside him, O'Rourke, still living, but drawing every breath with such difficulty that I felt certain his last hour had come.

I raised his head, and spoke to him. He knew my voice, and, by a superhuman effort, managed to support himself on his elbow, as he took a small purse from his breast-pocket; he placed it in my hand, and said, "Phil, darlin', I know you've the brave and thrue heart, though it's only a boy you are. Listen to my last words. Kape my secret, for my sake; never let on to man or mortial you saw me here. Give that purse to Mary—take her to her frinds in Amerikay—she'll never hear of *this* there, and may larn in time to forget me. Tell her we shall meet in a better place; and hark!

my eyes are growing dark, but I can hear well enough, there are futsteps—they are coming this way; run, for your life; if you are found here, you will die on the gallows, and that would break your poor old father and mother's hearts! Bless you, Phil, alanna! Remember my last words, and, as you hope for mercy, do my bidding!"

He drew a deep sigh, fell heavily from my arms, rolled over on his side, and there—with the dead agent's fixed and glassy eyes staring the frightful stare of death straight at him—lay cowld and still!

The sound of the futsteps came nearer and nearer. I started at my best speed for home. When I stepped into the house, the children had been put to bed, but the ould people were still talking by the dim light of the nearly burnt-out turf fire. I wished them good-night, plading fataigue, and reached my small room without their having an opportunity of noticing the state of alarm and agitation I was in.

The next day was an awful one for me. The violent death of the middleman was in every one's mouth; but it was some relief to find no mention was made of the finding the corpse of poor O'Rourke.

I concluded the footsteps we had both heard were those of some of his associates, and that they had carried off and concealed his body.

I fulfilled O'Rourke's wishes to the best of my power; saw Mary Sheean safe on boord ship, put her in the care of a dacent, middle-aged country-woman of her own—and as I was assuring her, in O'Rourke's words, that he would soon join her, all I had to say was cut short by the arrival of a

parcel of peelers on boord, and the rason of their coming was the assassination of the agent had been discovered. O'Rourke was missing, and so suspicion fell on him—and there was a reward of two hundred pounds offered for him. It was thought possible he might be on boord the *George Washington*, and they had come, with a full description of his person, to sarch the ship.

The passengers—and it was a tadeous job—were all paraded—over three hundred in the steerage, let alone the cabin and the crew—every part of the ship was overhauled, but, as may naturally be supposed, no Miles O'Rourke was found.

I need scarcely tell yez, boys, what a relief that was to pretty Mary Sheean and myself.

When the police-officers had left the *George Washington*, she beckoned me to her, and whispered, "Thanks be to the Lord he was not on boord! though I know he would never take any man's life; still, as he was out that night, it would have gone hard wid him. But, never fear, he'll come by the next ship; and so I'll wait and watch for him at New York. There's his box—take care of it for him till we get there; and see, here's the kay—mind that, too; maybe I'd lose it."

I hadn't the heart to undecaive her, so I answered her as cheerfully as I could, put the kay in my pocket and the box in my locker, and went about my business, wid a mighty heavy heart entirely.

All went on smoothly enough—but about the tenth day after we sailed, a report got afloat that the ship was haunted.

At first, the captain only laughed at such an

absurd rumor; but finding the men believed it, and went unwillingly about their duty after dark, unless in couples, he set to work to find out who had been the first person to circulate the story.

After a deal of dodging and prevarication, it was traced to black Sam, the nigger cook.

The skipper called the ould darky up to the quarter-deck, and then, in the hearing of the cabin-passengers and most of the crew, the cook stated, afther we had been at say for a few days, that one night, as he was dozing in the caboose, he was startled by the appearance of a tall figure, with a face as pallid as death, noiselessly entering through the half-open door. The ghost—for such Sam was willing to swear it was, to use his own words, "on a stack of bibles as high as the main topmast"—had on a blood-stained shroud. It slowly approached the terror-stricken cook, who, fearing it intended to do him some bodily harrum, sprang from his bunk, and yell'd loudly for assistance. At the first sound of Sam's voice, the lamp wint out of itself, and the ghost vanished.

Several sailors bore testimony to hearing the cook screaming for help—to the fearful state of fright he was in; and, as they could see no trace of the apparition Sam so minutely described, confirmed his report as to the sudden disappearance of the supernatural intruder.

This was the origin of the report; but, some days after, at least half a dozen seamen declared they had seen the self-same spectre gliding about the deck soon after midnight; and among them the boatswain, as brave a fellow as ever brandished a rope's-end, declared that, upon waking

suddenly one night, he saw the ghost sated on his locker, either imitating the action of a person ating voraciously, or making a series of such horribly ugly grimaces as would have done honor to Vanity Fair itself.

The whole affair was considered a good joke by the skipper and cabin passengers; but those in the steerage and the ship's crew placed implicit confidence in the cook's narrative, corroborated and supported as it was by the sailors and the boatswain.

For my part, I had no faith in any worse sperrits than those than that come out of a bottle, or, maybe, a hogshead, and I lost no chance of trotting out the friends of the ghost.

But my turn had to come—and come it did, with a vingeance.

One night, boy-like, I had been braggin' mightily loud about my courage. Ould Sam offered to bet his three days' grog against mine I daren't slape in the caboose he had deserted since he saw the sperrit that same night.

The wager was made, and I turned in, thinking what a laugh I should have against the ould darky when I handed him back his complement of rum.

I'll do the ould nagur the justice to say, whin I accepted the wager, he offered to let me off; and, when he found I was determined to stick to it, he warned me, with a sigh that sounded like a groan, I had much better not; but anyway, happen what might, he hoped I would hould him harmless, and forgive him for my misfortune, if any should overtake me.

Wid a smile, bedad! I promised to do so, and,

when the time came, turned into the bunk, and was soon fast aslape.

How long this lasted, I don't know; but I was suddenly awoke by feeling a cowld, clammy hand passing over my face, and whin I opened my paypers, judge of my dread whin I saw the lank spectre I had been making a joke of standing by my side. Bedad! if St. Patrick's Cathedral was stuck in my throat, I couldn't have felt more nearly choked. The crature, whatever it was, seemed as tall as the manemast, and as thin as a rasher of wind.

Every hair on my head sprang up, and my eyes seemed starting out of their sockets to meet those of the ghost, which were as big as saucers, and were fixed on mine with a look that seemed to go through and through them, and come out at the back of my head.

I tried to cry out, but I couldn't; but if my tongue couldn't chatter, my teeth could. If the big skeleton's bones had been put in an empty cask, and well shuck up by a couple of strong min, they couldn't have made a bigger noise than my jaws did.

I tried my hardest to remimber and reharse a prayer; but sorrow the taste of one would come into my head. Shure, everything dacent was frightened clane out of it. The only good thing I could call to mind was what my mother taught me to say before males. I thought that was better than nothing, so I whispered out, while I was shivering with the fear that was upon me, "For what I am going to recave, may the Lord make me truly thankful!"

"THE CRATURE, WHATEVER IT WAS, SEEMED AS TALL AS THE MAINMAST."

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Whin I had done, the ghost's jaws moved, and, in a voice so hoarse and hollow, that it might have come from the bottom of a churchyard vault, half-moaned, half-groaned, "It's grace you're saying, you imperint young blaggard!"

"It is," says I, trimbling all over. "That is, if it's not displasing to your honor's lordship."

"That depinds," says he, "upon what you are going to give me to ate after it."

"Ate!" says I. "Why, thin, be good to us! can you ate?"

"Thry me," says he, "and you'll see whether I can or not; and make haste, for my time's short! I must go down agin almost immadiately, and it isn't the bit or sup I've had for near onto five days; and by rason of that, although I was a strong man once, it's nearly gone I am!"

"Gone where?" I asked.

"To my grave," says he.

"Bad cess to them, whoever they were, that ought to have done it, and didn't! Haven't they buried you yet?" I inquired.

"What would they bury me for?" says he.

"It's customary with corpses where I come from," I answered.

"I come from the same place," says he. "They are bad enough there, in all conscience—more particularly, by the same token, the middlemen, tithe-proctors, and excisemen; but they didn't bury live min in my time," says he.

"But they did dead ones," says I.

"Of coorse," he assented. "And it's you that will have to bury me mighty soon, unless——"

"Unless what?" I demanded, in a bigger fright than ever at the thought of having to turn sexton to a sperrit.

"Well, unless you give me something to ate and drink," says he.

"Take all there is in that locker," says I, "and welcome—and be off out of this."

"Don't say it agin," says he; and he opened the locker, and walked into the cook's store like a shark that had been kaping a six weeks' fast.

It was wonderful to see how the tears stood in the poor ghost's eyes, how his jaws worked, and his throat swelled, as he swallowed mouthful after mouthful, the bigness of a big man's fist. In a few minutes he turned to me, and said, "Take my blessing for this, Phil!"

I was startled to hear the ghost call me by my own name; but as I didn't want to encourage him to kape on visiting terms, I thought it wouldn't do to let him become too familiar, so I said, mighty stiff like, "Fill yourself, honest spirit, as much as you plase, but don't be Phil-ing me—I don't like such freedom on a short acquaintance—and you are no friend of mine," says I.

"I was onct," he replied.

"When?" asked I.

"When we were in the ould counthry," says he. "When you tuck the purse from me for Mary Sheean, and promised to spake the last words I spoke to her."

When I heard him say that, all my ould fears came over me fifty times stronger than ever, for hadn't I broken my promise to O'Rourke? And I could see now, from the family likeness, this was

his spirit; and instead of telling her *all* he said, only given half his message to poor Mary!

"Oh, be me sowl, good ghost!" says I.

"If I'm a ghost, I'm——"

He made a long pause, so I spoke.

"Never mind *what*," says I. "I don't want to axe any *post-mortem* questions——"

"*Blest!*" says he.

"That's a great relief entirely," says I. "But if you are blessed, I'm no fit company for you; so never mind your manners—don't stay to bid me good-by, but go at onct!"

"You don't want me to stay?" says he.

"I don't," I replied.

"You are more changed than I am," he added.

"I shouldn't wonder," says I, "seeing the sort of company I am in."

"Do you find fault with my company?" asked he.

"I do," says I.

"And you wish me to go—down below again?"

"As soon as convanient," says I.

"Well, Philip Donavan," says he, "aither I or you are mortially changed."

"It's you," says I. "My turn hasn't come yet, but it will, all in good time."

"Phil Donovan, do you know who you are spaking to?"

"Faix I do, to my sorrow!" says I; "to Miles O'Rourke's ghost!"

"Miles O'Rourke's ghost!" says he.

"Dickens a doubt of it!" says I. "Didn't I see his body lying stark and dead, wid the blood welling out in gallons from his heart?"

"It wasn't my heart, man alive—it was my shoulder; and shure it was the loss of that same that made me faint! Take a hould of my hand, if you doubt me! There's little left of it but skin and bone; but it's human still!"

It was moightily against my own wish, and wid a cowld shiver running down my back, I did as he asked; but whin I did catch a hould of his fist, ghost or no ghost, he nearly made mine into a jelly wid the squeeze he gave it.

"Murther alive!" says I.

"Hould your whist! Remember, I'm a ghost!" says he.

"That's thrue for you!" says I; "and you must continue one for the rest of the voyage, or maybe you will be trated as something worse!"

"What's that?" he asked.

"A STOWAWAY!" says I. "The skipper's a good man enough; but if he discovers you, the way he'll sarve you will be awful!"

"What will he do?" inquired he.

"Give you thirty-nine and land you!" says I.

"Land me where?"

"In the middle of the say!" says I.

"Murther!" says he.

"Moighty like it," says I; "but he'll do it!"

"I'd have to give up the ghost then!" says he.

"You would, in airnest!" I tould him. "But you mustn't do it yet. Tell me how you come on boord?"

"I will," says he. "When the boys found me, I had only a flesh wound, and had fainted from loss of blood. They got a car, and smuggled me down to Cork. I had scarcely set my fut on deck,

as the peelers came rowing up the side. When the order was given to muster all hands, I made my way to the hould, and hid myself in the straw in an empty crate in the darkest corner of the place. The men searched pretty closely, but, as good luck would have it, they passed by my hiding-place."

"You must go back to it. But now, Miles O'Rourke, answer me one question, and, as you are a man, answer it truly!"

"What is it?"

"Did you kill the agint?"

Wake as was O'Rourke, he stood grandly up; the ould honest, proud look came into his pale, wasted, but still handsome face; and pointing his long, thin finger to heaven, he said, in a deep, low tone, the earnestness of which I shall never forget to my dying day, "*As I hope for justice some day here, and mercy hereafter,* I DID NOT!"

The hug I gave him would have broken many a strong man's ribs, let alone a ghost's; but I couldn't help it. Bedad, if I had been a Roosian bear itself, that hug would have been a credit to me.

"What on earth am I to do?" asked Miles.

"Anything you plase," says I, "whin you get there! But you are on the water now, worse luck —and that's what bothers me. I wouldn't give a thrawneen for your life, if you are discovered and recognized as Miles O'Rourke. There's two hundred pounds reward offered for you, and the evidence seems pretty strong against you."

"How would they know me?" says he. "You didn't—and no wonder! Shure whin I came on boord I weighed fourteen stone; and now, ten stone

in the one scale would pitch me up to the ceiling out of the other!"

"That's thrue enough," says I; "but you must bear in mind I tuck you for somebody else's ghost, and didn't make any allowance for the starving you have had, which, particularly as a stowaway, they would be sure to do. But now you must get back to the hould. I'll contrive to drop half my rations and a trifle of grog down every day—see Mary, and consult with her. Shure, one woman's wit is worth a dozen men's in a case like this."

"But——" says he.

"Hush!" says I; "I hear futsteps. We are in a tight place now! There's only one chance for us: I'm aslape, and you're a ghost again!"

I fell back in my bunk, and began snoring like a porker wid the influenzey, just as the door opened, and the ould nagur poked in his black woolly mop.

Miles stood up to his full height, and raised his hands above his head, as if he was going to pounce upon him.

The poor cook, terrified beyond measure, fell down as flat as a flounder on his face, shrieking out at the top of his voice, "The ghost!—the ghost!"

O'Rourke stepped over his body, and hurried back to his hiding-place, unseen by the bewildered sailors.

I pretended to awake from a sound slape, and had the pleasure of hearing the toughest yarn that ever was spun, from Sam, in which he gave a soul-thrilling description of his encounter and hand-to-hand fight with the dreadful apparition.

I saw Mary the next morning, and broke the

news of O'Rourke's being on board as gently as I could. Our plans were soon laid. By the time we came to an anchor off New York, I contrived to drop, unseen by any one, a bundle, containing a suit of O'Rourke's clothes, shaving materials, and a small looking-glass, down the hold.

When the passengers were paraded, the police-officer, who had remained on board, was too much engaged reading the following description of a supposed murderer to pay much attention to pretty Mary Sheean, or the poor, pale, stooping invalid she was supporting.

"Two hundred pounds reward for the apprehension of Miles O'Rourke. Description.—Florid face, curling brown hair, large and muscular limbs, finely developed chest. Height, about six feet; weight, rather under fourteen stone."

Unlike as the half-starved wreck was to what he had been when he came on boord, I was in an agony of fear, until I saw Mary safely landed on the Battery, convulsively grasping the hand of the SHIP'S GHOST.

"Yes, Paddy," says the doctor, "that's all very cheerful and entertaining, but decidedly unscientific, and you didn't tell us how you got here."

"Not he!" said Scudds, growling; "I thought it war going to be a real ghost."

"I say, look at him!" said Bostock.

But nobody would stop to look at him; the men shuffling off once more—all but the doctor and myself—as that figure regularly melted away before

our eyes—body, bones, clothes, everything; and at the end of five minutes there was nothing there but a little dust and some clear ice.

"It's very wonderful!" the doctor said; "but it won't do. We must find another, take him up carefully, and not thaw him out, but get him back to Hull in his ice, like a glass case."

"Come back, lads; the Irishman's gone," I said; and they came back slowly; and we had to set up the tent in a fresh place, and, while we did it, the doctor found another body, and set us to work to get it out.

We got this one out capitally; the ice running like in a grain; and after six hours' hard work, there lay the body, like an ornament in a glass paper-weight, and the doctor was delighted.

About two hours after, as we were all sitting together in the tent, we heard a sharp crack, and started; but the doctor said it was only the ice splitting with the heat of the sun; and so it proved, for five minutes after, in came a gaunt, weird-looking figure, with a strange stare in his glimmering, gray eyes; a wild toss in his long yellow hair and beard, both of which were dashed with patches of white, that looked as though the color had changed by damp or mildew, or the bitter, searching cold. With such a dreamy, far-off gaze, he looked beyond the men who sat opposite, that they turned involuntarily and glanced over their shoulders, as though they expected to see something uncanny peering at them from behind. His long limbs and wiry frame, together with this strange, eerie expression, give him the air of some old viking or marauding Jute come to life again,

and ready to recite a Norse *rune*, or to repeat a mystic *saga* of the deep, impenetrable North.

"Eh," he said, "I was just thinkin' a bit aboot the time when I went wi' Captain Parry to his expedition."

"Why, you weren't with Captain Parry?" said the doctor.

"It's aboot mysel' I meant to tel ye, if ye'll no' be so clever wi' contradictin', and I say once more—(here he glowered into space, as though he saw something a long way off)—I was thinking about a man I met wi' in about eighty-two degrees o' latitude, when I was out wi' Captain Parry on the third expedition of the *Hecla*, in 1827, at which time I was no more than forty year old."

"Forty in 1827!" said the doctor. "Why, how old do you make yourself?"

"I'll no mak' *mysel'* any age; but let us—no' to be particular to a year or so—put me down at seventy-six or seventy-eight."

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed Scudds. "Why, man, you're not above fifty."

"Weel, if ye maun tell my story yersels—maybe ye'll gi'e me leave to turn in, or light my pipe. I'll no' speak if ye've no wish to hear; but now I mind that I'm eighty-four year old last Thursday was a week, for I was four-and-twenty when I first had ten years' sleep at Slievochan."

The man's eyes were fixed on space, as though he saw all that he was about to narrate going on in some strange way in the dim distance; and except an occasional grunt of interest, a deep-drawn breath, or the refilling and relighting of a pipe, all was still as he went on.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCOTCH SAILOR'S YARN.

ALL about Slievochan, there was no lassie like Maggie Miller. Her father was a kind o' overlooker to the Laird o' Taggart, and so was reckoned weel-to-do. He was an elder o' the kirk, too, mind ye, and had a farm o' his ain—or what was called a farm, though it was no mair than might be a sma' holding, with a kye or twa, and fowls and live-stock, and a bit o' pasture, and eneugh to butter the bannocks and give a flavor to the parritch; so that he was called a weel-to-do man. I doubt if any of ye know Slievochan; and it's no deal likely ye would, for it's but a by-place where, down to the village, a few fisher-bodies live; and up beyant the hills an' the cliff is the sma' farmers and the laird's folk, with just the kirk an' the bit shops, and beyond that the kirk itself, weel out o' sight o' the little whusky shop; and beyant the widow Gillespie's "Herrin' Boat Inn," where our fishers go at times, when they ha'e drunk out the ale at their own place, "The Coil," or, maybe, tasted a runnel o' hollands or brandy, that has no paid the exciseman, or got the King's mark upo' it.

For there's strange ways amang the fisherfolk, and between them and the village is a wide differ-

ence; though you'll mind that some o' the bodies wi' a boat o' their ain and a cottage that's as well keepit as they that was built by the laird himsel' —and perhaps a store o' claes and linen, and household goods, and a bit o' siller put by at interest—may hold up their heads even wi' men like Donald Miller, or may speer a word to the minister, or even ask him to taste a glass of *eau-de-vie*, when he gaes doon for pastoral veesitation. But, hoot! I'm clavering o' the old place as it was above fifty years ago, when I was workin' wi' my uncle, Ivan Dhu, and my Aunt Tibby sat at the door, knit, knit, knitting, as she watched for our comin' hame, and went in to make the parritch or skim the sheep's-head broth, directly the jib o' the *Robert Bruce* cocked over the ridge, and came tackin' round the Ness o' Slievochan, with uncle and me looking to the tackle and the gear, and my braw young cousin Rab at the tiller, wi' his bonnie fair face an' clustering curls, all blowing in the breeze that lifted us out o' the surf, and sent us in with a whistle an' a swirl, till the keel was ready to grate upon the beach. Rab was only eighteen, and we were great friends—though I was an orphan bairn, and Uncle Ivan had taken me and brought me up—so that his boy might have been jealous, but there was no jealousy in him. Uncle was a bachelor when I first went to him, a little raw lad, from Inverness, and I'd learnt to manage a boat and do fisherman's work before Rab came, so that I grew to be a strapping lad, and was able to teach him in his turn. We loved each other weel, Rab and I; and quiet Auntie Tibbie used to sit knitting, and watch us both with a smile; and

silent Uncle Ivan, with his great limbs, and dark face, and black locks—though he gave me to know that Rab would have the boat one day, if not a bigger one or two—would grip my hand and say, "Stick to the laddie, if aught suld happen, Sandy; for if ye're no my son, ye're next to him, and not much further frae my heart."

Weel—but about Maggie Miller! Her father, you observe, was a man o' some substance, and one trusted by the laird; so that the minister, and the bailie o' the nearest town, an' Mrs. Gillespie, an' the farmers all, ca'd him Mister; and my Uncle Ivan, who had his pounds away in the bank, ca'd him Mister, too, and would send me or Rab up with a creel o' fish when we had a fine take, now and then; so that we were on a footing of visitors; and Maggie would stand and laugh and talk with me, and would gie Rab a blink, and a rose-blush, and a smile that made us all laugh taegither, till I used to wonder why it was that I wasn't one of Maggie's lovers—of which she had three already, not counting Rab, who was two years younger than she, and, of course, was lookin' at her as a boy of eighteen always looks at a girl of twenty, too shy to speak, and too much in love to keep silent, and so talking to anybody who'll listen to him, which in Rab's case was me.

It wasn't much in my mind that the boy loved her, but someway I'd got used to thinking of him and her at the same time; and many a time I've brought her home some trifle that I got from one of the coastmen—when they brought in a runlet or two of spirits, or lace, and tabacker—some French gewgaw or a handkerchief; and a good deal of my

spare money went that way, for Uncle Ivan kept us pretty short of spending. It was like giving it to Rab, I thought; but yet I noticed once or twice that the boy looked serious when I showed him anything to give to Maggie, though I often asked him if he'd give it to her himself.

Maybe I'd ha' been less easy if there had seemed to me more than a lad's liking and a lassie's pleasure, that meant little of lasting; for there were two men, if not three, hankering about Donald Miller's house such times as they could make excuse to gae there, an' one o' them made believe often enough, for he was head keeper to the laird on some shootin's that lay an hour's stout walking from Slievaloch; an' now it was a couple o' rabbits for Mistress Miller, or a word or twa with Donald about the bit cover for game beyond the big house; but a' the time he sat an' smoked his tabacker, or took a sup o' parritch or sowans, or a dish o' herrin', he'd have an eye to Maggie. An evil eye it was, too, for he was a lowerin' carl, and 'twas said that he was more poacher than keeper; while some folk (and I was one) knew well that there was anither business brought him round toward Slievaloch. I shame to say it, but at that time—ye ken I speak of nigh sixty year ago—there was a smoke to be seen coming out frae a neuk i' the hills at a wild place where there seemed to be naething but granite and bracken, and a shanty or two, for shelter to the men quarrying the granite. But it wasna frae the huts that the smoke rose. A good two mile awa' there was a stone cottie, more like a cave, as though it had been burrowed out by wind and water, and got

closed in wi' boulders o' rock, and covered with earth and broom, so that naebody could see how it led by a hole i' the prong o' the hill to just sic anither hut, and neither of the twa to be seen, except by goin' o'er the hill-side. In this second one there was a fire smoulderin' under a furnace, and a' the place dark and smoky, and fu' o' the reek o' sma'-still whisky, that had nae paid the king's duty; an' on a cowhide i' the corner crouched auld Birnie, as blear and withered as a dried haddie, waitin' for his wife to come trudgin' back wi' silver shillin's and the empty leather bottle of twa gallons that she'd carried out full i' the mornin', under her lang, patched cloak, or hid awa' in the loose kindlin' wood at the bottom o' the ricketin' cart. It was suspected that Rory Smith, the keeper, was in league wi' auld Birnie in this sma' still, and that both he an' the o'erseer o' the quarrymen—a Welsh body o' the name o' Preece—knew weel enough what went wi' the whisky. The two men were as unlike as a raven and an owl; Smith bein' suspectit of half gipsy blood—though few men daur say so to his face, for he'd a heavy hand an' a look in his face that boded mischief—while Preece was a slow, heavy-eyed, quiet body, short an' square-built, and wi' a still tongue an' decent, careful ways, that yet kept his rough men in order, and got him speech of the tradefolk at the village where he lodged such times as he wasna' up at the quarry.

These were the twa that went each in his own fashion to visit Donald Miller, and to cast an eye on Maggie; but neither o' them could boast of much encouragement, least of all the keeper, who

saw that the lassie shrank from him, and would hae no word to say when he tried to win her wi' owches, an' fairin's, an' even costlier gifs frae Edinbro' itsel', which she refused, sayin' he maun keep them till he foun' a lassie o' his ain. Preece thought it mare prudent to wait till Smith was out o' the way; an' both of them, as I foun' out after long years, were jealous o' me for seemin' to find mair favor wi' Maggie, an' carryin' her the little presents that I told ye of, though never a word o' love-making passed my lips; and perhaps baith o' us thought more o' my cousin Rab than o' each other, though had it nae been for Rab, mind ye, I'll no say that there'd been so clear a stage for the other twa if Maggie had been as winsome when I went to pay my respects to her parents, and laughed wi' her at the door.

Weel, it was just on one o' the occasions when I was on my way to the house, one evening in the airly summer, carrying with me a gaudy necklace o' shining beads that I'd bought of a packman at Farmer Nicol's shearin', whaur I'd been the day before. I'd shown the toy to my step-mother, and uncle, and to Rab too, and had asked him to take it to Maggie himsel'; but he put me off, sayin' that he'd rather not be amang them that was gi'en and gi'en sma' things, for he'd gied her the best o' himsel' a'reedy. It was, maybe, to ponder over these words that I took the way up the steep bye-path that led up the beach, an' so zig-zag along the cliff's edge. There was a sort o' neuk beside a turn o' this path, where was a big stane, that one might sit upon, and so lose sight o' everything but the distant sea an' the beach below, to which

the rocks shelved down, rugged an' bare in places, an' in others wi' a toss an' tangle o' weed and brushwood, where there was a hollow in the face of the cliff.

There I sat, an' sat, and felt all strange an' drowsy, dreamin' about Rab an' Maggie, but not rightly thinking o' anything; but holding in my hand the bauble that I had taken out o' my pocket to look at. Night was comin' down quick out at sea, and the mist was creepin' over the hills, when I heard a man's footstep on the path, and stood up to see who came.

No need to look twice; 'twas Rory Smith, the keeper, trampling quick and heavy, and with a heavy cudgel in his clenched hands—a murderous look in his eyes.

He turned upon me, clutching his stick.

"Whaur are ye goin'?" he said, "and who's that for?" pointin' to the necklace that hung on my fingers.

"I'm no here to answer questions," answered I; "but ye can know for a' that, or ye can turn back, and see for yoursel'."

"Go, if ye daur!" he shrieked; "for it shall be but one o' us, if ye'll no turn about the way I'm walkin'. It's through you, is it, that Maggie flouts me, an' throws back my gifts, that are o' mair cost than ye can earn, ye loupin' beggar?"

"Haud off!" I shouted; "or I'll no answer for mysel'," for he was pressin' on, an' there was no room for a struggle between the rock an' the road's edge. "Haud off, or not one, but baith, may make a turn too many."

"Gie me that trash," he said, making a snatch

toward the necklace. "Gie it me, and go no more to Maggie's house—you nor your baby cousin Rab. Gie it me, I say!"

He was upon me before I could answer him, mad wi' passion and wi' whisky, and dealt me a heavy blow upon the head; but I was quicker and stronger than he, and, before he could repeat it, had him by wrist and shoulder. As I've said, 'twas no place to wrestle in, and when we both came to grips, we had but one scuffle, and then our footing was gone, and I lost him and myself, too—lost sense, and hearing, and a' things.

. . . . .

The sun was high in the sky, when I came to myself—shining like a golden shield over the blue sea, and the wavin' grass and heather; and I could just see the ripple o' the waves and the fleece o' white clouds far away, but naething else.

It was a while before I could do that, for I seemed to be covered wi' dried grass and leaves above my chin as I lay there in a deep cleft in the cliff side, mid a tangle of stalks an' roots, and dry driftsand, that had got into my claes, and filled my ears and eyes. I was like a man paralyzed, too; and had to move an inch at a time, till I could rub, first my arms, an' then, when I had got upon one elbow, give my legs a turn, and then my back. The first thing I did was to feel if the necklace was on my wrist still; but it had gone; dropped off and lost in the scuffle. Next I crawled to the edge of the hole, and peered down the cliff side, and all round, as far as I could see, to look for the body of Rory Smith, living or dead.

I could not tell how he had fallen; but unless he had clutched at the long weed, or reached a cliff lower down, he'd hardly be alive after a whole night; for, had he fallen on the beach, and been disabled, his body was now under the water, above which the sea-birds wheeled and piped in the bright morning air.

Perhaps he had cried out, and help had come, while I lay senseless. However it was, I must get to the village and see what could be done. The quickest way was to climb up to the path again, and so get toward the long street o' Slievochan, nearer than going back to find uncle an' Rab, who'd most likely be at Donald Miller's to look for me.

It was strange to think that I should have been fightin' for Maggie, an' all the time was the only one that made no claim to be her lover. I began to wonder whether, after all, the lassie might have understood me different, and had been waitin' for me to speak out, preferrin' me to Rab even, and wonderin' why I had his name always foremost. The thought was na' a good one, for I felt a kind of sudden fancy to win the girl, even though I couldna say I loved her; indeed, I'd thought of her only as a winsome child; and, lately, had never spoke of her to Rab, except wi' caution, for I could see that the puir laddie was sair in airnest. Somehow, the thought o' my bein' Maggie's lover, though I put it frae me, caused me for a moment to wonder what she'd say to me if she saw me all dusty, and with torn clothes and grimy face. This made me look at my clothes, and, wi' a sort o' wonder, I found that my pilot

coat had got all brown at the back, where I lay upon it, and broke as though it had been scorched. My shoes, too, were all dry and stiff; and as I began to climb the cliff, very slowly an' painfully, my shirt an' trousers gave way at knees and elbows. I sat down on the bank of the path after I'd reached it, a'most dead with faintness an' hunger, so put my hand in my pocket to find my pipe. It was there, sure enough, along wi' my steel bacca-box, and there was bacca there too, an' a bit o' flint to get a light. The bacca was dry as powder, but it eased the gnawin' of my limbs, and I tottered on.

On to the first cottages, leading to the main street, where I meant to go first to Mrs. Gillespie's, and find some of the fishermen to search the cliff for the keeper. As I came nearer to those cottages, I could see that something was stirring in the village, for women an' bairns were all out in the street, an' in their best claes; and across the street farther away was a rope bearin' a great flag an' bunches of heather, an' the people all about Mrs. Gillespie's door, an' the by-way leadin' toward Donald Miller's cottage, and so right up to the kirk. I could see a' this only when I got closer; but I could na' turn up the high street. A kind o' fear an' wonder kept me back, an' more than once I shut my e'en, and stretchit oot my arms all round, to feel whether I was na' dreamin' it all in the hole of the cliff side, or, maybe, in my bunk at hame, or on the deck of the *Robert Bruce*, wi' Rab at the tiller, an' uncle smoking forrard.

I turned up a by-way, and got near to the church itsel', where a man and woman—strangers to me

—were leanin' against the wall, talkin'. I thought I knew everybody in the place; but these people had just come out o' a cottage that belonged to auld Nannie Dun, and had turned the key o' the door as though they lived there, at the sicht o' me coming along the path.

They eyed me over, too, as I came near, and answered wi' caution, when I asked what was goin' on the day.

"Weel, it's a weddin' in the kirk," says the wife, "an' sae lang waited for that it's little wonder a' the toon is oot to give joy to the bonnie bride an' groom. Ye're a stranger, and where may ye come frae?"

"Nae, nae," I said, between a laugh an' a fright. "Ae body kens me hereabout; but where's auld Nannie, that ye've come to see to-day; she'll know me."

The couple looked skeerit. "Auld Nannie Dun was deed an' buried six years ago come July," said the woman. "Ye've been long away frae this toon, I'm thinkin'."

"Frae this *village*," says I. "Slievochan's na' a toon."

"'Deed, but it is, though, since the auld laird's death, and the new street was built, two years' ago; when Donal' Miller an' Ivan Dhu bought the land that it stands on for a portion for son an' daughter—but there they come."

"Just one moment," I cried, clutching the man by the arm. "Will ye kindly tell me the day an' the year?"

"What day, mon!" says he, lookin' at me in doubt.

"This present day o' the month and the year. Is it auchteen hunnerd saxteen?"

"Hoot, mon!" cried the fellow, gettin' away frae me. "Nae; but the third June, auchteen hunnerd twenty-sax. Ha'e ye been asleep these ten years?"

I had!

It rushed upon me a' o' a sudden. My claes like tinder; the bed o' dry leaves; my shrivelled boots; the bacca in powder. There, in that cave o' the cliff I'd slept in a trance, with ne'er a dream to know o', an' the world had gone round while I stoppit still. There was a soun' o' talking an' laughin' at the kirk door, an' then a shout, as a band o' fishermen came out, all in their best rig; an' then a shoal of pretty lassies, an' then my uncle Ivan, an' Mistress Miller—(Old Donald was deed, then, I thought); and then the bailie an' my Aunt Tibbie; and, after all, Rab an' Maggie—he looking a grand, noble man, for he was no longer a boy; but wi' his father's strength, and Aunt Tibbie's soft, tender smile; an' she—Maggie, I mean—older an' paler; but wi' a light in her een, an' a lovin' look upon her face, that made me forget mysel' in joy to think how they had come together at last, whatever might have happened in the ten years.

But what would happen if I should be seen by the bailie, starin' there at the church porch, in my rags and unkempt hair an' beard—I, that had perhaps been sought for, and might be suspectit? —Ah! that was dreadfu'!—suspectit o' murder! for where was Rory Smith?—and who could tell the true tale but me?

I might be recognized in a minute; for how did I know whether I was altered?—and I could remember half the men who were there shouting, and half the women claverin' in the kirkyard. I crept away.

The best thing I could do was to make off down to the fisher village on the beach; for everybody had come up to the wedding, and I could gain my uncle's house without meeting any one that I knew. So crammin' what was left of my bacca into my pipe, I turned down a lane, and could see the man and woman that I'd spoken to stopping to look after me.

I was wrong in the thinking that I should reach my uncle's house unknown. At all events, I was known after I'd entered the house, though there was naebody there. The first thing I did was to stir up the embers o' the fire, for I was chilled, though it was a warm summer's day; then I cut a slice from the loaf, and took a mug o' milk from the pan; an' then went to the ben, to see after washing myself, and go on to my ain auld room, to look what had come o' my claes.

The room was altered, but the chest was there; and though my *men's* claes had gone, some of my *boy's* claes were there; an' even some of them that I wore as a child, when Aunt Tibbie made me a new suit. I was thocht to be dead, then, but wasna' forgotten.

If a mon can cry, it does him a world o' good at times—that is, if he doesna' cry much nor often. I cried, and it did me good. Then I went up to the little bit o' broken glass that was nailed to the wa' to speer what like I was. My hair had began

to whiten—bleached, maybe, by the sea air. I had a strange, wild look, for hair and beard had grown all tangled, and my face was gray instead of red-brown, as it once was. Would my uncle know me?

When I went down again to eat some more bread, and to look for a little whisky to put wi' the milk, there was a man's face peerin' through the window; and before I could stir, the door-latch clicked, and in walked my uncle Ivan. I had started to my feet, and my uncle strode in, with his hand uplifted, as if to strike me.

I never stirred, but looked at him full in the eyes.

His hand fell to his side.

"What brings ye here frae the dead, or from waur than the dead, Sandy Macpherson?" he exclaimed, hoarsely.

"I've no been that far; if they that I'd have looked for had looked for me," I answered. "If Rory Smith is alive, he can tell ye about it; or if his dead body's been found, I'll tell my story over that afore all Slievochan."

"Then it was you, after all?" said my uncle, sinking into a seat, and leaning his head on his hands. "An' I've stood up for ye, and swore that if there was foul play 'twas he, and not you—or maybe Preece, as your aunt thocht at first, because he had the necklace. Can ye, an' will ye, clear up this dreadfu' mystery?"

"Uncle Ivan," I said, takin' him by both hands; "look at my face and hair; look close at my claes and shoon! Come wi' me, and bring others too, to the cliff face below the sitting-stone in the turn

o' the path—and then it's just possible, but it's no likely, ye'll believe what I have to tell. First, let me say to ye, I'm innocent o' any crime. Do ye believe that?"

My uncle lookit at me long and hard, and I grippit his hands tight.

"I do," he said, at last.

A weight sprung off my heart.

"Uncle, did I ever tell ye a lee?"

"Never that I ken."

"Never—never! I kenned he wud come back!" said another voice.

It was Aunt Tibbie, and she took me in her arms. "I believed ye to be innocent, Sandy; and sae did Rab, and a many more," she said. "But where ha' ye been?"

"Ye'll no believe me, gin' I tell ye. I don't wonder at that. Ye can't believe it, mebbe, but I'll tell ye."

"It's naething wrong, Sandy?" said Aunt Tibbie.

"Nae, naething but laziness, an' I couldna help that. I've been asleep—in a traunce—in a stupor—like a toad in a stane, for a' these years, an' have come to life this verra day!"

Then I told them all about it; and sic things as traunces—though not, maybe, to last sa long as mine—had been heard o' before, and they could not but believe it; but they were awa' again to Rab's wedding, frae which they'd come hame only to fetch a silver cup, that was to drink the healths o' the bride and bridegroom.

"Auntie! where's my silver mug, that I won at the games at the laird's hair'st?" I asked.

"Safe put away wi' the chaney, lad, an' noo it's yours again."

"Auntie, wad ye tak it as my gift ta Maggie? and, uncle, will ye gie my message to Rab, that I'll no' stay here to bring an ill name or suspicion on him or his; but if he'd come an' gie me his hand before I'm awa'?—t'will be little to him, and much to me, though I've been true to him for a whole lifetime—what's gane of it, at least."

So auntie took the silver mug, and they both left me; but not till I had heard how, twa days after I had gane, David Preece had been to Donald Miller's cottage an' offered Maggie a necklace o' gaudy beads, and how Maggie handed them back tae him, though he told her he was to leave Slievochan next day. Aunt Tibbie heard o' this; and when Maggie told what was the like o' the bauble, there was a cry for Preece, till it was heard how Rory Smith hadna' been seen for those three days, and that I hadna' been found or heard o'.

So, ye ken, it was which o' us should come back first wad be ca'd to find the other twa.

I sat brood—broodin', waiting for aunt and uncle to return. Eatin' and drinkin', and smokin' (for there was beef an' whisky, and a cold pie o' auntie's making); but I wadna' change my claes till they should gae wi' me to the cliff face.

Before the sun was off the sea, I heard a sound of voices outside; and in a minute I had a hand o' Rab, and a hand o' Maggie and her mither, an' half-a-dozen o' our fishers round us who'd known me from a laddie; and then uncle said, "Now let us away to the cliff path before any o' the rest come back fra the wedding. While they think

Rab and Maggie hae gone off o' the sly, as, indeed, they hae, and are ganging ower to the island in the new boat to Rab's cottie."

"'Twas gran' o' ye, Rab, and o' ye, too, Maggie, to come to see me on your weddin'-day," I said. "I'll no forget it when I'm far awa."

"I would ha' been no gran' not to ha' come," said Rab, "to tell our brither that we stan' against a' that daur accuse him o' wrang. Why need ye gae, Sandy? Stay and tak' the brunt o't."

"An' for why, Rab? To bring trouble an' cold looks upo' them that I'd as sune die as cause grief to, an' that when there's no need o' me to work here. Nae, nae, I'm awa' to sea, Rab; an' when I come hame, only friends need know who 'tis, except, indeed, I suld find Rory Smith alive in my travels; and, who knows, but I may find puir David Preece, and get my necklace back."

"Dinna touch it—dinna touch it!" said Aunt Tibbie, shudderin'.

So we a' went to the cliff, and there, standin' by the stane, in my withered claes and puckered shoon, and wi' my whitened face an' a', I told them again; and we men went down to the hole on the cliff side, while the women sat on the stane above, and we shook hands all round.

That same evening, two boats shot out o' our little bay, the first one a new craft, Rab's ain, wi' a gran' flag flying, and carrying him an' his bonnie bride hame. Auntie and Mistress Miller were with us; uncle sitting by me while I stood at the tiller, and two men forward. Behind it was a row-boat, wi' a piper at the prow, playin' the bride hame. In this boat we a' went back to Slievochan, except

Rab and Maggie; and once more I slept in my old room till mornin'; when, wi' a fit-out o' claes, and some money that I was to repay as soon as I could draw my wages, I set out for England.

It was when the Polar Expedition of 1827 was getting ready, and I was one o' them that joined it, though ye may not know my name.

I'll no' describe onything o' that voyage, sin' ye will ha' it that I'm repeatin' frae book; but I'm near to the end o' my yarn now. When we met the last o' the natives near to the Pole, there was a party came out to barter with us, and one man came forward to speak English, which he did sae weel that we lookit hard at him. We had little to barter at that time, but presently this fellow pulls out something frae his pouch, an' holds it up by the end, and ye'll no believe it, but there was the row o' beads that had nigh lost me my life, and had quite lost me my hame above ten years before! Up to him I strode. "David Preece," I shouted in his ear, "ye can gae back to Slievochan; for 'twas no you that killit Rory Smith, nor that stole my present, meant for Maggie Miller."

"No," said Preece, slowly, after looking round to see whether any of the Esquimaux noticed him; "and I'll tell you, for your comfort, that you didn't kill Rory Smith neither; for when I went to the great American plains, after leaving Scotland, and finishing a job in Cornwall, I went across with a party of trappers and Indians, and there was Rory sitting on a mustang, and looking for all the world like a Mexikin. I shall come home with you now, and bring this necklace with me. The people here think it's a charm."

As Sandy Macpherson ceased, and his eyes came back out of space, the men found their tongues.

"And did he come back, Sandy?"

"Yes; but not with me."

"And did you go back to what d'ye call it—Slievochan?"

"Of course I did, and left a nest-egg for Rad and Maggie's eldest boy."

"And that was how long ago?"

"Above thirty years."

"And have you been since?"

"Of course; to leave a dowry for *his* eldest *girl*."

"And how long's that ago?"

"Say ten years."

"Then you haven't been to sleep since?"

"Haven't I though! I've had thirty years of it, in three different times; else how should I be eighty year old, and yet out here."

"Well, of all the yarns——" began Bostock.

"Hoot! of a' the yarns and a' the yarns! What's wrang wi' ye? Wad ye hae a Scot's yarn wi'out plenty o' twist tae't?"

"Here, stop!" cried the doctor—"stop, man! You haven't told us how you got frozen in here. Don't say you found the North Pole?"

"No fear, doctor," I said, as a cold wind seemed to fill the tent, and the place of the Scotch sailor was taken up by a thin, blue, filmy mist.

"But I wanted——" began the doctor.

"Don't; pray don't try to call him back, uncle," said his nephew.

"But he's told us nothing about his being frozen in," said the doctor.

"And won't now," growled Binny Scudds. "I say, lads, do you know I like this here. We'll have another one out to-morrow."

"Let's go outside and look," said the doctor.

We did, and there was the square block of ice neatly open, leaving the shape of the Scotch sailor perfect, even to the place where his long, thin nose had been.

"Well, turn in, lads," said the doctor; "we'll hunt out another to-morrow."

"So we will," said the lads. "Who's afeard?"

"Nobody!" growled Bostock. "I say, doctor, what's the difference between these and ghosts?"

"These, my men," began the doctor, "are scientific specimens, while your ghost is but a foolish hallucination of the——Bless me, how rude!—the fellow's asleep."

And the rest were soon in the same condition. Early the next morning, though, the doctor gave the order, "Strike tents!" and we journeyed on a couple of miles along the edge of the great crater, looking curiously down the mysterious slope, at the pale, thin mist far below.

"I should like to go down," said the doctor, looking longingly at the great hollow; "but it won't do; there's the getting back, and I should be such a loss to the scientific world. Hallo! here's another."

He pointed to the clearly-seen figure of a man underneath the ice, and the men, having now become familiar to such sights, set to laughingly, and were saved much trouble, for the ice cracked away from the figure, and after a few strokes they were able to lift the body out, and lay it in the sun,

-where, before many minutes had passed, it made the motion of taking snuff, and then ejaculated—

"Declare to goodness!"

"Take a nip, mate," said Abram Bostock, handing a tot of rum; but the figure waved it away.

"Who are you?" said the doctor. "How did you get here? Don't say you've already discovered the North Pole."

"Pole? North Pole?" said the figure, sleepily. "I know nothing about the North Pole. No, indeed!"

"Well, who are you?" said the doctor. "Come, give us a scientific account;" and the stranger began

CHAPTER V.

THE WELSH SAILOR'S YARN.

My name aboard ship is registered John Jones. Yes, indeed. Though, to confess exactly, I was born the son of Hugh Anwyl, miner, of the parish of Glanwern, in the county of Merioneth, and my father baptized me by his own name; so that John is Hugh, and Jones is Anwyl, indeed. I mention this at starting, to prevent my yarn being water-logged before it reaches mid-ocean.

Well, mates, a beautiful spot is the village of Glanwern. The broad river Mawdach, which runs between the clefts of the mountains, d'ye see, and is overhung with silver birch on either side, separates us—that is, the Glanwernians, indeed—from the town of Barmouth.

It's a many year since these eyes beheld that familiar spot; yet, my lads, I never got becalmed, or down with a fever, or otherwise on my beam-ends, but what my thoughts turned to old Glanwern—for it's the brightest place, with the darkest memories, I ever knew.

Yes, indeed, I think I see it now. And you won't go for to suppose, because my eyes are all a-leak, like a brace of scuppers, that I've therefore lost my trim. After all, 'tain't Glanwern. It's what happened to me there, when I was a youth as

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gay as a poppy, with the hand of a man and the face of a girl.

That's the mischief, messmates.

'Twould have been happier for Hugh Anwyl if he'd been as ugly in those days as John Jones is at this moment; for, you see, my lads, when I was quite young, I got rather to like a girl called Gwen —Gwendoline that is; we, indeed, called her Gwen —Thomas. She was next-door neighbor to my old dad's cottage, and she'd a deuce of a knack of fondling on you without so much as touching a button of your coat.

Yes, Gwen was one of the sort that act like magnets to a seaman's lips. I never loved her, d'ye see; but I was flattered by such a smart craft coming alongside, and—well, indeed,—I played the fool. I kissed her, because it seemed to do her good. And she—darn her cunning head!—she meant it all! I know that she'd have done anything, indeed, if I'd but have passed the word. But I didn't. I never so much as talked about the parson.

It was about a year after this, that Rhoda Howell, the miller's daughter, came home from the boarding-school at Dolgelly, full of music, and English, and French, and all them things.

My stars! she was a picture, she was! I—that's to say, Hugh Anwyl, you know—was taken all aback, and felt something or other dance the double-shuffle under my waistcoat pocket.

Well, mates, we fell to what you may call flirting. I asked her to go for a walk, and she, indeed, consented; and so it went on, as you might say, from better to best.

Yes, indeed, I could not give those days a truer name than best; for I am sure that they were the only real sunshine either of us ever felt in our lifetimes.

Ye see, Rhoda loved me. Why, heaven only knows. And I—I could have died for her.

There wasn't a bright lad in Glanwern that didn't envy the luck of Hugh Anwyl; and, rightly enough, too; for I swear, though I've travelled north, south, east, and west, and have met with women of all nations, not once have I ever found the equal of Rhoda Howell. I almost shrink from speaking her name. It seems—well, *sacred!* Poor Rhoda! like a flower of spring, you died early! Yes, indeed, ours ain't one of them love tales which comes all right at t'other end of the book. She's in heaven; and Hugh Anwyl—he ain't just exactly in the other place; but he's not so very far off neither, being afloat, and registered John Jones, A.B.

To come back to my yarn, indeed.

One clear autumn evening, when the sun was lighting up the heather on the sides of Cader Idris, you might, if you'd a-happened to be there, have beheld a scene which the whole world don't show out of North Wales, me and my girl, Rhoda, was walking, cosy-like, through a quiet bit of wood, where none could hear, and I don't think I ever felt my heart so swell with joy as I did that moment, when she says, says she, beating her foot on the grass, "Shall I tell you a secret?"

"Yes," I answers, just glancing at her, and seeing her lips come over pale.

"Will you promise me," she asks, "to keep it?"

"Promise!" I cries out; "I'll *swear!*" You see, I was getting curious.

She looks at me serious—yes, indeed, very serious. Then she whispers, quite confidential-like, "I've got a lover!"

"What!" I bellows, quite savage. It didn't take much to make me jealous; and I felt as if I would have killed a rival ker-slap.

She smiles, in a faint sort of a fashion. Then she mutters, just as if the trees were all a-listening to us with ears instead of leaves, "I shan't say, unless you'll agree to be sensible."

A kind of a sulky feeling come over me, my boys, at her teazing words; but I told her I'd always do exactly, indeed, as she wished.

"Then," says she, with a wry face, "it's David Thomas. He've been to father this morning, and asked for me. Yes, indeed!"

"I—I'll fight the lubber!" I sings out, forgetful of my promise.

"Hush!" she whispers, as soft as a wind which don't so much as shake the canvas; "I don't think I'm going to marry any one; but I'm certain sure I won't have David Thomas!"

Whereat she fell a-beating her little foot again upon the dead leaves.

Well, mates, I didn't quite like that prophecy of hers; but 'twas better than to hear her say she'd allow herself to be driven into wedlock with such a one as David. So I held my peace. Yes, indeed. Yet I felt as if a thunderbolt were placed aloft, right over my head, or as if a volcano were a-going to spring up under my feet. My brain began to wobble like bilge-water in a ship's hold,

when all of a sudden an idea struck me. Yes, indeed! What's more, my bearings was right for once.

"It's that girl, Gwen," I says, "as is at the bottom of this rig. David Thomas is a sawny landlubber. He'd never have the courage to speak of his own accord. Particular when he's received no encouragement from you."

But Rhoda didn't exactly see through Hugh Anwyl's glasses. She wasn't a sort of girl to think Gwen a snake, being herself as innocent of wrong as the snow which falls straight from Paradise.

Says she, quite solemn, "You must not go to charge Gwen Thomas with them things. Gwen's my dear friend, indeed."

Well, my lads, if I hadn't got narvous, I'd have told her that me and Gwen had been just a trifle free with each other's lips. But, I tell ye, I feared to say the words. She was chuck full of a sort of what you may call a romance. Often and often she've said, that she felt so happy in having picked the first flower of my heart—whereby she meant that she'd got the whole of my love. And so she had. Yes, indeed. May I be shrivelled to a mummy if she hadn't. Only, ye see, if I'd gone to tell her that Gwen and I had been playing the fool, she'd mayhap have thought different. So I kept my own counsel.

"Now," says she, in a wheedling, coaxing way no lubber ever could resist, "it will all come right in the end, if you won't go to act foolish. Yes, indeed. Father likes David, but father loves Rhoda. And when David asks me, and I says,

'No,' father ain't the kind of man to say, 'You must.' "

"Ay, ay!" I answered her; "but ain't he the boy to say 'You mustn't,' in case a lubber of the name of Anwyl should put that there same curious question?"

Well, my lads, Rhoda, at this, went off on the starboard tack, for fear I should make out the cut of her jib. She daren't face me; for she couldn't deny that Miller Howell was a cranky lot, indeed. So she took to picking blackberries, as if they was so many hot-house grapes, instead of being as red as currants, and as sour as verjuice.

"You can't deny it, Rhoda!" I sings out, feeling vexed indeed.

Then she turns round from her blackberrying, and I spied a tear in the corner of her eye. So I knew what I said was the cause of her hiding her head, and I held my tongue, being ashamed.

As we was walking homeward, later on, the brace of us tongue-tied and melancholy as an albatross before a cyclone comes on, Rhoda whispers in my ear, "Can't you trust a girl's wit? I'm a match for any two of 'em!"

"Right, sweetheart!" says I, gripping her hand. For all that, a notion, indeed, crossed my brain, "that she who is better than two mayn't be good enough to tackle three." And so it proved.

Well, mates, it might have been two or three days later on that I chanced to be in Barmouth, and there, in the porch of "The Wynn Arms," I came into collision, as you might say, with one Evan Evans, an old shipmate of mine, who worked on the Anna Maria Sett alongside of me, and could

handle a pick as cleverly as our boatswain the rope's end. Evan, indeed, when he claps eyes on me, sings out, right cheerily, "A drain of grog, my boy!"

"With *you*," I answers, "Evan, yes, indeed!"

So we turns into the bar-parlor of "The Wynn Arms," and he orders two goes of rum punch, hot.

When we was sat down comfortable, I began to twig, d'ye see, that his rig was that of a seafaring man. His arms was tattooed, and his kit looked smart.

"Avast!" I sings out,—"avast, Evan Evans! Surely, you've never joined the horse-marines?"

"Mate," he replies, giving me a slap on the shoulder, like a true seaman, "there's a better mine, containing richer mineral than the old Anna Maria, and that's the open sea!"

Faith, mates, when he spake them words, I mistook him for one of them land-lubbers who dresses up in seaman's rig, and takes nurses and babbies out for a run in a pleasure-boat.

Yes, indeed. But Evan soon put matters straight.

"Hugh Anwyl," he says, pulling out a leather case, "this ere holds a hundred and fifty pounds, beside gold and silver."

"Take care of it, Evan, then," says I—for I knew he was a light-headed sort of craft; "or," says I, "your master will be pulling of you up on account of losing his moneys, indeed."

"Master!" he sings out, with a roar of laughter like a fusillade—"master! I ain't got no master! Them's the property of Evan Evans."

"My lad," I cried, in a sort of a serious voice,

"I'm sorry to hear it. I always took ye for a honest lubber."

Whereat, for a second, he looked mighty wrathful. Yes, indeed. Then, as he perceived that I was what ye may call all abroad, he burst out laughing again as if his sides would burst.

"Evan," says I, "I've lost my bearings."

"So you have," he answers; "for the fact of the matter is, you don't understand what you're a-talking about."

Well, my lads, with that he cooled down a bit, and forthwith commenced to relate how he'd been on a whaling expedition to Greenland, and had met with luck. The conditions was that all was to share and share alike—skipper, crew, and all. They had a hard time of it. One of 'em lost a nose, another a finger or two, and some of 'em their toes. Yes, indeed; the cold in them latitudes is mighty thieving of prominent parts of the human frame.

But then, if the risk's considerable, the gain's even more so. Now, my lads, this shipmate's good fortune set me a-thinking—as, indeed, was but nat'ral. David Thomas didn't own so much as one hundred and fifty pounds—not he. His old father might be worth that sum, if his possessions was all sold. But in the principality, where money's scarce, a little goes a long way; and I calculated, on that account, if I could draw anything approaching so heavy an amount of pay on a single venture, Miller Howell would not stand in the way of my wedding his daughter Rhoda.

"So," says I, "Evan, my old shipmate, you and I have always been the best of comrades. I'd like

to enjoy a similar slice of good fortune. Not as though I'd be greedy, Evan. Give me my ship's biscuit and my share of grog, and I'm content. But, Evan, there's a pretty craft that wants to moor alongside of me, and her skipper won't agree, because I haven't got a shot in my locker. That's it, indeed!"

Evan, he looks at me steady; then he holds out his fist with all the grace of a port-admiral, just as if he meant to serve double grog or give leave to go ashore.

"Hugh," says he, "the day after to-morrow I sail again for the North Seas. For my mother, Hugh, she's old and she's sick, and this 'ere pocket-book, with its contents, is for her. Join our crew, my hearty, and I'll promise ye fair play and a sailor's greeting. You'll bring back with ye enough to satisfy your lass's skipper, and I'll dance at your wedding."

Up I springs to my feet, and, though I was short of money, I orders another grog. And then Evan and I struck our bargain; and, I tell ye, I felt another and a stronger man.

"Now, Evan," I sings out, "I'll be off home to tell my lass."

"Avast," says my shipmate, "you'll need to see about your kit. It's darned cool up in them latitudes!"

"Ay, ay," I replied—"to-morrow will do for that."

"Right," he answers; "we'll meet at this very spot to-morrow, by your leave."

Well, mates, with a swelling heart, I crossed the Mawdach River, and began to trudge back to

Glanwern. About a mile or so to the north of the village, I ran athwart Gwen Thomas, with a roll of music under her arm, and a broad grin on her deceitful face.

"You're quite a stranger, Hugh," she says, dropping a curtsey, as if I were the parson, or Sir Watkin himself. "Yes, indeed; now Rhoda Howell's come back to Glanwern, you've lost your eyes for every one else. If I wasn't good-tempered, I'd take offence."

Now, my lads, I was a bit in the wrong about this girl Gwen. I don't say that she wasn't most to blame of the two, yet conscience made me feel uncomfortable as regards the part I had played toward her. So I couldn't be otherwise than civil, when she met me so pleasant like, instead of being out of temper, as I expected.

Says I, "Gwen, lass, mayhap I do care more for Rhoda than for most others; I'm not ashamed to own it. Anyhow, for her sake, I'm going on a long voyage."

"What?" she cries, anxiously, her lips turning pale indeed.

So, when the girl passed the question to me, I up and told her the whole tale, and how that, in forty-eight hours, I should be afloat on the briny ocean, with the ship's bows standing for the North Sea.

She heard me out, quite dazed like. Then she says, says she, in a very quiet, demure fashion, "You'll come to the singing-class to-night, if it's only to wish us all a farewell? Rhoda will be there, but she will walk with the miller; so, if you like to keep me company for the last time, you may."

In those old days, Hugh Anwyl boasted a tenor

voice. Yes, indeed. And this girl Gwen got the reputation of being a prime musician, and used to train our class. They had her all the way off to Llangollen, to perform at an Eistedfodd, as they call it in the principality, for she sang like a nightingale. Well, when she asked me to walk with her, I thought it churlish to refuse. So, like a simpleton, I said, "Yes;" and away she tripped, with an odd laugh, as if she was mighty pleased.

I did not know it at the time, nor did I hear it until long after, but Gwen's brother David, that same afternoon, had been to see my Rhoda.

He told her that Miller Howell expected that she would have him for a husband, and had given him permission to ask her, and that Hugh Anwyl cared for too many girls to love her.

However, in the evening I called for Gwen, and we two walked together to the waterfall.

Nobody had arrived before us; so we sat down on the cromlech, and began to sing what you may call a duet—that is, a stave for two voices.

But my heart was all with Rhoda Howell; and, as I sat singing alongside of that artful craft, Gwen Thomas, I thought of nothing but the good news I had to tell, and how it would joy the girl I loved so dearly.

It might have been ten minutes or more—at last, however, I spied the old miller, and behind him his pretty daughter, arm-in-arm with David Thomas.

Rhoda's face was unusual white, and her eyes didn't quite look straight ahead, but seemed to tack about, as if the wind had shifted to a stormy quarter.

Not much was said by any one, and that little not worth remembering. After a bit, Gwen pulls out her pitch-pipe, and starts off with "Hail, smiling morn!"—a very proper ditty; then "Hop-a-derry-dando," "The Men of Harlech," and a lot more—we men singing tenor and bass to the girls' treble voices.

Ah, lads! I think I hear that harmony roll away with the waterfall. I've never forgotten it. The first storm in mid-ocean and the last song your love sings—these, my boys, are sounds which stick to your ears like barnacles to the bottom of a hulk, or limpets to the rocks on the shore.

In the middle of this sing-song, as you may call it, I spied Rhoda—who wouldn't so much as look or smile at me—whisper to her father, the old miller; and presently they both left. I wish now that I'd given them a stern chase, and boarded, like a bold buccaneer. But, you see, I couldn't rightly make out Rhoda's looks. Something was amiss. That I guessed. And I thought that the sky being so ugly and overcast, I'd better wait for the chance of clear weather on the morrow.

As soon as the singing was over, I saw that lubber David—who I could have kicked all the way to Dolgelly with pleasure, indeed—I saw him catch Gwen by the buttonhole, and give her some sort of a tip. She looked earnestly at him, and smiled. Then she turned away, quite composed, indeed.

My lads, I can guess what it was that deceitful varmint said to his minx of a sister. They was laying a trap for me, the two of them. Ay! Yes, indeed! And they caught me, as clean as a shark a sailor's leg!

"Rhoda's got a bad headache," says Gwen, sidling up to me.

"How do you know?" asks I, none too civil, for I was downright savage with myself and every one else all round.

"She told me so," answered Gwen, as glib as an eel.

"I didn't see her speak to you," says I; nor did I, indeed.

"She complained of it this afternoon," remarked Gwen.

I didn't say no more. I was out of temper and out of sorts.

"Don't be angry with Rhoda!" whispers Gwen, quite kindly like. "She's as true as steel!"

My lads, them words were designed to play me like a fish with a bait; but they sounded so soft and consoling as to make me feel ashamed for my rudeness to this girl.

"Thank'ee, Gwen!" says I. "You're a good sort! I did hope to have told Rhoda of my luck to-night. But 'tain't to be, and I must just wait till to-morrow!"

"The news will do her a power of good," whispers Gwen, quite confidential. "Yes, indeed. David wanted to have her, but she won't wed aught but Hugh Anwyl; and when you've got your money, you know, her father will give his consent."

Now, you'd say, any man Jack of you, that these were fair and, to use a figure of speech, sisterly words. By George, lads! when I heard them, I caught hold of her hand and shook it hearty. It seemed to me that she was handling me better than I handled her.

"Gwen," says I, "I've plighted my troth to Rhoda Howell, so I won't offer to kiss you; but I do thank you, as a true friend to us both."

Bless you, you should have heard her laugh. It wasn't a clear, merry, innocent sort of laugh, like my poor Rhoda's, but a kind of a nasty sneer. It made me thrill again.

"I don't bear malice, Hugh Anwyl," she cries. "Not I! You and I were better friends before Rhoda came—that's all!"

I was just a little puzzled by her words. By now, however, she had gathered up her music, and began to walk away.

"Dear, dear!" she cried, as we got into the road which leads from Glanwern to Dolgelly; "why, I declare, it's quite dark indeed, and I've got to go to Llanbrecht to fetch some butter from Farmer Jenkins, and I'm deadly afeard to pass the Clwm Rock, because of Evan Dhu!"

You see, that we'd got a Davy Jones in them parts, a sort of a ghost. The folks called it "Evan Dhu," or "Evan the Black."

Says I, quite quietly, "If you're afeard of Evan Dhu, why don't you ask David to go along with you?"

"He's out in the fields by now," she answers, "taking care of the calves."

"Wait till he's done with the calves, then," I observes, a-yawning.

Whereupon, dang me! if the girl didn't commence to whimper.

"Shiver my timbers, lass!" cries I, "if you're that frightened of the ghost, dash me if I don't go with ye!"

This was just what this Jezebel wanted.

We walked together through the village of Glanwern, and I looked up anxiously at the windows of Miller Howell's house, if perchance, indeed, I might catch a glimpse of Rhoda. As we approached, I fancied I saw her face in the top garret window. Perhaps I didn't. Anyhow, it wasn't visible when we passed.

We trudged on slowly through the silence of that mountainous district, our path lying through clefts and brushwood, till at length the black Clwm Rock towered in front of us, like a hideous monster, in the moonlight.

Suddenly I felt my arm gripped. The feeling, my lads—I give you the word of honor of an old sailor,—was so strange, that I imagined Evan Dhu had arrested me. Yes, indeed! It startled me. But I was in error. It was not Evan Dhu. It was the false girl, Gwendoline Thomas.

"Ugh!" gasped she, as if she were terrified to hear the sound of her own voice,—"ugh! I saw him, *dear* Hugh! Yes, indeed."

"What?—who?" I asked.

"Hush—hush!" she whispered. "Speak not another word! We are in peril! He will kill us!"

"Don't be a fool, Gwen!" says I, unceremonious-like, for she was clinging to me quite desperate.

"Silence," she whispers, "or you'll provoke him! I tell you he is watching me! There—there!"—a-pointing with her hand at the rock.

I'll own that at that particular moment I felt rum indeed—especially when Gwen began to

shake like an aspen, and seemed as if she'd fall down. To save her, I clasped her resolutely round the waist; and thus, with her head leaning on my shoulder, we passed the dreaded Clwm Rock, the moon all the while shining full on us.

We had but just turned the corner toward Llanbrecht, when, I take my solemn oath, I heard a deep-drawn sigh!

"Run!" whispered Gwen. "*That's him!*"

My lads, we did run every step of the way to Llanbrecht: and when Farmer Jenkins heard our story, he had out his trap indeed, and drove us home, four miles round by the road, so that Gwen should not be frightened a second time.

"Don't talk about it," said Gwen; "folks will laugh."

"I'll tell Rhoda, and no one else," was my plain answer.

On the morrow I rose with the dawn, and ran round to the miller's door. Every other day, for the past six months, Rhoda was out and about at that hour, scrubbing the steps or feeding the chickens. There was no Rhoda then; so I wended my way to "The Wynn Arms," Barmouth, where I waited for upward of four long hours. Then at last Evan Evans lurches up, a full three sheets in the wind, and as thick-headed as the thickest landsman.

Well, messmates, it took me a sight of time to see about that there kit. Ye see, I hadn't too many shots in the locker, and wanted to do the thing cheap. But this lubber, Evan Evans, was more harm than good, having lost every atom of his tongue except the part that's constructed to do

the swearing. That was lively enough, and woke up the storekeepers.

It was quite dusk before I returned to Glanwern, and I had, as you remember, to leave by daylight on the morrow. Now, indeed, thought I, the time has come when I must speak to Rhoda; so I marches for the third time boldly up to Miller Howell's door, and spies about for my poor dove, who I loved more than life.

The door, my boys, was shut, and locked, too; which, by the bye, ain't much of a custom in that part of North Wales, where "Taffy ain't a thief," and we can trust our neighbors as ourselves.

"Rhoda!" I calls out, quite gently, yet so as she must hear, unless she's out of the house, or gone deaf, indeed.

None answered. No, indeed, none. My dear boys, I felt desperate; so, with a firm hand, I knocked at the door-handle.

In a jiffy, out comes Miller Howell, with a face like the mast of a rakish yacht, long, and thin, and yallow.

"What d'ye want, Hugh Anwyl?"

The words was spoken harsh indeed, and angry. I started as if he had struck me across the face, or ordered me into irons.

"Master," says I, "I'm going away for a long journey, perhaps never to come back again; and I wish to say good-by to your daughter Rhoda."

He looks at me from top to toe, and up again from toe to top. The man's features were as hard and pitiless as if they had been cut out of a block of Welsh granite. Then, without a word, he slams the door in my face.

Friends and messmates, I'm a Welshman, with the hot blood of Cædmon in my veins. I couldn't bear this, indeed; so I stood outside and cried, at the top of my voice, "Rhoda—Rhoda Howell, I, Hugh Anwyl, beg and pray you to come and wish me a farewell! Rhoda, answer me, for I am going away!"

Silence! She would have come out, indeed, but was prevented. That I heard afterward. So I left—I'm not ashamed to own the truth—with the tears a-streaming down my cheeks and my heart breaking. I could have gone straight and drownded myself, I was so distraught. Presently I felt a finger on my sleeve.

"Hugh!" whispers a soft voice, "I'm downright grieved for you."

It was Gwen Thomas.

I didn't answer, mates'—for why? Because I couldn't; my eyes was leaking, and my timbers all of a shiver, and I seemed without so much as a helm. But I suffered her to lead me into the back room of old Thomas's cottage, not knowing for what port I was being steered. Then I sat down, and she clasped my hand quite tender.

"Hugh Anwyl," she says, "whatever I am—and I know I'm not as good-looking as others—I'm a true, sincere friend. Being so, I tell ye, I am grieved to see ye thus wrecked within sight of land."

I couldn't talk to her; but, after a bit, she got me calmed down, and I quite felt as if I must try to please her—in a sort of a tame-cat fashion.

At last, she says, quite as if the thought had come into her false head accidental indeed, "Write

Rhoda a letter, and I'll promise you she shall have it safe. I'll give it her myself."

I was that excited, I took the girl in my arms and embraced her. Then I sat down and I wrote to Rhoda, telling her the whole tale, and how, for her sake, I was going to risk my life on a whaling expedition; and praying her to keep single for me till I came back again with money in my hand so as to buy the consent of her father.

When I done that, my lads, I gave it, sealed careful, to Gwen Thomas; and, kissing the girl, who cried, as I thought, uncommon unaccountably, I lurched forth, and turned my back upon Glanwern.

Here I ought to pull up and rest a bit, for there's what you may call a break in my yarn. I was far away from the girl I loved, toiling, as we mariners only toil, for the cursed gold which should make two miserable souls happy.

To cut my story short, however, I was gone, as near as may be, twelve months. Our first venture failed. We met with nothing but bad luck, and ran into Aberdeen harbor as empty-handed as we went. So, as I wouldn't come home without the necessary money, I just slips a short line into the post to let Rhoda know that Hugh Anwyl was alive, and to beg her to be patient. Then, indeed, I joined a second expedition, which was fortunate. We brought back with us a fine cargo of sealskins, besides whalebone; and when I drew my share, it amounted, all told, to nigh upon two hundred pounds, together with some furs, and a few curiosities.

I ran down straight from Aberdeen, travelling

night and day by the railway, just such another autumn night as the one when I started. I rolled, unsteady like, into Glanwern village, and the first soul I meets was Gwen Thomas. My stars! you should have heard her give tongue. If I'd been Evan Dhu himself in the guise of a seafaring man, she couldn't have looked more terrified.

"Why, Gwen, lass!" cried I, "you ain't never afeard of Hugh Anwyl?"

She was afeard, though; and she'd good cause, too.

"How's Rhoda?" asks I. I ought to hae mentioned my father, but my mind ran, like a ship in a whirlpool, to one centre.

"Oh," says Gwen, turning away her head, "she's still ill!"

"What d'ye mean?" I sings out, clutching her arm tight.

"Don't!" says she. "You sailors are so rough, indeed."

"You speak the truth, then!" cries I; for I guessed from her look and the queer color in her darned figurehead, that something was tarnation wrong with my Rhoda.

She looks at me as steady as a gunner taking aim.

"Hugh," she says, "you'll have to hear what will hurt you sooner or later. Rhoda is married to David!"

I didn't speak. Neither did a tear escape my eye. But I sat down on a stone by the roadside, and I felt as if I'd been struck by a flash of lightning.

Gwen went on talking; and at last, when she

saw what was up, she ran and fetched my father, and the old lubber hoisted me somehow indoors, and shoved me into a hammock. I rather think I was what ye may call mad.

How long my mind remained so affected I can't rightly judge. My first recollection is of seeing a pale face sitting by my side, and I heard a sound which brought me to.

It was Rhoda. Although she'd been forced into a marriage with that lubber David, she'd not forgotten me; and she'd come to tell me all. Yes, indeed. And what's more, she'd come none too soon; for if Hugh Anwyl was somewhere in the latitude of lunacy, Rhoda was in the longitude of decline. She was dying! Yes, indeed!

She told me how they had hatched up a lie about my having made love to Gwen. To prove this, David had plotted to make me walk that evil night with his false sister to the Clwm Rock. Rhoda had at first refused to believe their story. But when she saw us—for she lay concealed behind the rock—pass by as if we were lovers, with Gwen's darned face resting on my bosom, she was cheated into thinking me false. Still she would have heard me, and learned the truth before I left Glanwern, but her old father interfered; and when I was gone, and Gwen had never delivered my letter, she consented to wed David—just, as you may say, for the sake of peace—believing the yarn they invented, that I had run away to sea and would never come back. It was not, indeed, until she received my letter from Aberdeen that she learned how wickedly she had been deceived. From that moment she fell ill, and nothing would

please her but to return to Miller Howell's house. As for David, indeed, she would not look at him, or speak to him; and she did but sit still and wait for death, hoping, as she told me, that Hugh Anwyl might return before the end came.

My lads, her sweet voice somehow steadied my brain. I saw the whole spider's web unfolded. Gwen and David had plotted to sink our craft, and there we lay waterlogged.

"Shall I smash the pair of them?" I said.

"For my sake, no, indeed," she answered. "Let us forget them. It is too late, Hugh Anwyl."

Mates, I rose from that hammock that very instant, a strong, hale seaman once more. My life was wrecked, in so far as happiness goes. But the strength remained to me. Not so, poor little Rhoda. Her cheek was hollow, and the bright eyes shone like the evening stars in the southern seas. So weak was she, that I had to support her back to Miller Howell's house.

"Come in, Hugh Anwyl," says the old, greedy father, looking as if he could drop down dead from shame and sorrow on the doorstep. "Come in. This is stormy weather."

I couldn't speak to the man. I would not reproach him with having been the cause of this wreck—for his features, indeed, displayed the punishment he had received. But I came in, and I sat down by Rhoda's side on the sofa.

In a minute or two, the door opens, and a figure intrudes itself.

Rhoda put her hands in front of her face, as if she was shamed beyond all bearing, indeed. I

started to my legs, for I could have killed the man.

It was David Thomas!

Yes, mates, David Thomas, come to see his lawful wife, Rhoda Thomas, who was married to him six months ago.

Rhoda put her finger on my arm, and I sat down like a lamb. It was impossible to avenge her wrong.

"Be off out of this house, which you have brought ruin into!" says Miller Howell, speaking to his son-in-law.

The lubber sheered off.

My mates, I can tell no more. We sat as we was, on that there sofa, till sunset; and then—and then, poor Rhoda died in my arms!

Yes, mates, she dropped off to sleep; and, for all her miserable end, she died happy indeed!

As for Hugh Anwyl, he went back to sea. But after every voyage he returns to Glanwern churchyard, and he puts a bunch of flowers on a grassy mound—for that is his only home.

"Yes, that's all very pretty," cried the doctor, who had listened attentively; "but in the name of Owen, Darwin, and Huxley; Hudson, Franklin, Bellot, and Scoresby, how did you——Confound it! was ever anything so provoking?"

"He ain't left so much as a tooth behind," said Binny Scudds, looking down at the ice.

"But he had not discovered the Pole, my man. Here, search round; we may find one who has been there; but I hope not. I believe, my lads, that there is no Pole. That hollow there leads right

into the centre of the earth; or, through it, to the South Pole."

"Easily prove that ere, sir," said Binny Scudds.

"How, my man—how?" exclaimed the doctor, eagerly. "You unlettered men sometimes strike upon rich veins."

"You go and stand by the mouth of the hole at the South Pole, while we roll a big piece of ice down here. You could see, then, if it comed through."

"Yes, we might try that, certainly," said the doctor, thoughtfully. "But then I ought to be at the South Pole, and I'm here, you see. We might roll that block down, though, and see the effect. Here, altogether, my lads—heave!"

We all went up to a block about seven foot square; but it was too big and heavy, and we could not make it budge an inch.

"Hold hard a minute," I said, and I scraped a hole beneath it, and poured in a lot of powder.

"That's good," said the doctor. "That's scientific," and he stood rubbing his hands while I made a slow match; connected it; lit it; and then we all stood back, till, with a loud bang, the charge exploded, lifting the block of ice up five or six feet, and then, in place of splitting it in two as I meant, it came down whole, and literally fell into powder.

"I say, don't do that!" said a thick voice, and there, to our utter astonishment, sat among the broken ice, a heavy-looking, Dutch-built sailor, staring round, and yawning. "I'd have got up, if you had called me," he continued, "without all that row."

"How did you get there?" said the doctor.

"There? Where?" said the Dutchman.

"In that block of ice," said the doctor.

"Stuff about your block of ice," said the Dutchman. "I lay down to sleep last night on the snow, while our lads were trying for seal, off Greenland. But I'll tell you all about it. Haven't seen them, I suppose?"

"No," said Bostock, winking at us, "we haven't."

"They'll be here directly, I dare say, when they miss me," said the Dutchman.

"I say, matey," said Binney Scudds, "we've 'bout lost our reckoning. What's to-day?"

"To-day," said the Dutchman; "to-day's the twenty-fourth of July, eighteen hundred and forty-two."

"Thank you, my man," said the doctor. "But perhaps you'll tell us whom you are."

"Certainly," said the Dutchman; "but keep a look-out for my mates," and he began.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUTCH SAILOR'S YARN.

As for my name, it is Daal, Jan Daal; and if there be any of my kinsfolk going about saying that they have the right to put a "Van" before their name, and that they come of the Van Daals, who were a great family in the seventeenth century, and one of whom was boatswain of Admiral Van Tromp's flag-ship, all I can answer is that they say the thing that is not; and that people who say such things deserve to be beaten by the beadle all up and down the United Provinces. When I was a little boy, and went to school to the Reverend Pastor Slagkop, there was a boy named Vries—Lucas Vries—who did nothing but eat gingerbread and tell lies. Well, what became of him? He was hanged before he was thirty—hanged at the yard-arm of a Dutch seventy-four at Batavia for piracy, mutiny, and murder: to which shameful end he had clearly been brought by eating gingerbread and telling fibs. Mind this, you little Dutch boys, and keep your tongues between your teeth and your stuyvers in your pockets, when you pass the cake shops, if you wish to escape the fate of Lucas Vries.

And yet I dare say that—ah! so many years ago—I was as fond of gingerbread as most yunkers of

my age, and that I did not always tell the strict truth either to my parents at home, or to the Reverend Pastor Slagkop at school (he was a red-headed man who always hit you with his left hand, and he had but one eye, which glared viciously upon you while he beat you). But now that I am old, it is clear that I have a right to give good advice to the young: even to the warning them not to be guilty of the transgressions of which I may have been guilty ever so many years ago; because I have seen so much of the world, and have passed through so many dangers and trials, and have *not* been hanged. And this has always been my motto. When you are young, practise just as much or as little as you are able; but never forget to preach, whenever you can get anybody to listen to you. To yourself, you may do no good; but you may be, often, of considerable service to other people. A guide-post on the dyke of a canal is of some use, although it never goes to the place the way to which it points out.

That which is now the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Heaven preserve the King thereof, and the Crown Prince, and all their wives and families, and may they live long and prosper: such is the hope of Jan Daal, who drinks all their good healths in a tumbler of Schiedam) was in old times known (as you ought to be well aware, little boys) as the Republic of the United Provinces; and there was no King—only a kind of ornamental figurehead, not very richly gilt, who was a Prince of the House of Orange, and was called the Stadtholder: the real governors and administrators of the Confederation being certain grand gentlemen called Their

High Mightinesses. And very high and mighty airs did they give themselves; and very long robes, and very large periwigs, as flowing as a ship's mainsail, did they wear, so I have heard my old father say many a time, ever so many years ago. Mynheer Van Bloomersdaal, in his "Pictures of the Glories of Holland"—how I hated that book when I had to learn a page of it, every day, by heart, and how I love it, now that nobody can compel me to remember even a line of it; but I do so for my own pleasure,—Mynheer Van Bloomersdaal, I say, has told us that the United Provinces are seven in number, and consist of Holland Proper, with Gueldres, Zealand, Friesland, Utrecht, Groningen, and Over-Yssel. By the deep, seven. Always be sure that you are right in your soundings; and take care to put fresh tallow in your lead, to make sure what bottom you are steering to.

I think that I must have been born some time toward the end of the last century, or the beginning of the present one, in the great city of Amsterdam, which, after all, has the greatest right to be called the capital of Holland; for The Hague, where the King lives and the Chambers meet, is, though a mighty fine place, only a big village, and a village is not a city any more than a treykschuyt is a three-decker, or a boatswain an admiral. At the same time, mind you, if I was put on my oath before a court-martial, I would not undertake to swear that I may not have been born at Rotterdam, at Dordrecht, at Leyden, at Delft, or even at The Hague itself; for, you see, my father was a pedler, and was continually wandering up and down the

country (or rather the canals, for he mostly travelled by treykschuyt), selling all kinds of small matters to whomsoever would buy, that he might keep his wife and small children in bread, cheese, and salt herrings: which were pretty well all we had to live upon. But what does it matter where a fellow was born? The great thing is to be born at all, and to take care to keep your watch, and to turn cheerfully out of your bunk when the hands are turned up to reef topsails in a gale.

I know that, when I first began to remember anything, we were living in the city of Amsterdam, and in the very middle of the Jews' quarter, which I shall always bear in mind as having five distinct and permanent smells—one of tobacco, one of Schiedam, one of red herrings, one of bilge water, one of cheese, and one of Jews. At Cologne, on the Rhine, they say there are seventy smells, all as distinct from one another as the different ropes of a ship; but I have not travelled much on the Rhine, and know much more about Canton than of Cologne. Although we lived among the Jews, my father was no Israelite:—far from it. He was a good Protestant of the Calvinistic persuasion; and, in the way of business, sold many footwarmers (little boxes of wood and wire, to hold charcoal embers), for the churches. He chose to live among the Jews, because their quarter was a cheap one; and he could pick up the things he wanted more easily there than anywhere else; and, besides, Jews, for all the hard things that may be said about them, are not a bad sort of people to do business with. They are hard upon sailors, it is true, in the way of cheating them; yet they will

always let a poor tar have a little money when he wants any; and they are always good for a bite of biscuit, a cut of salt junk, and a rummer of Schiedam. I wish I could say the same of all the Christians I could name, who are by no means bad hands at cheating you, and then turn you out of doors, hungry and thirsty, and without a shoe to your foot. I don't say that a Jew won't swindle you out of your shoes, and your stockings, too, in the way of business; but he will always give you credit for a new set of slops, and this I have often said to our pursers aboard. Note this: that pursers are the biggest thieves that ever deserved to be flogged, pickled, tarred, keel-hauled, and then hanged.

I had six brothers and sisters—so we might have called ourselves the Seven United Daals if we had had the wit to do so. There was Adrian, the eldest. He was a clever yunker, and was bound 'prentice to a clock-maker. He went to England, and I have sometimes heard made a great deal of money there; but he never sent us any of it—and what is the good of having a rich brother if he doesn't let you share in his pay and prize money? My messmates always shared in *my* rhino when I had any; and if your brother is not your messmate I should like to know who is. Another of my brothers, too, the second, Hendrik by name, did very well in life; for being very quick at figures and ready with his pen, old Mr. Jacob Jacobson, the Israelitish money-changer, took a fancy to him and made him his clerk. He went away when he grew up, and for many long years I heard nothing about him; but it chanced once that, being at New

York, to which port I had shipped from Macao, I had a draft for a hundred and fifty dollars to get cashed; and the draft was on a firm of bankers who had their shop down by the Bowling Green, by the name of Van Daal, Peanut, and M'Cute. The "Daal" struck me for a moment; but seeing the "Van" before it I concluded that the name could not belong to any of my folk, and took no more notice of it. I presented my bit of writing at the counter, and the paymaster's clerk—a chap with a copper shovel in his flipper, as if he kept gold and silver by the shovelful in the hold—he gives me back the pay-note, and he says, "Sign your name here, my man." So I sign my name "Jan Daal, mariner." So he takes it into a little caboose behind the counter; and by-and-by out comes a short fat man with big whiskers, dressed as fine as a supercargo going out to dinner with his owner, and with a great watch-chain and seals, and his fingers all over diamond rings. "You have an odd name, my friend," he says, looking at me very hard. "It is Jan Daal," I says, "and it is that which was given to me at the church font." He reddened a little at this, and goes on, "What church?" "Saint Niklas," I reply, "in the good city of Amsterdam, so I have heard my mother (rest her soul) say." "And I, too," he begins again, reddening more than ever, "was christened at the Oude Sant Niklas Kerke; and I am of the Daals of Amsterdam, and I am your brother Hendrik." On this he embraced me; and I went along with him to the caboose behind the shop; and he gave me crackers and cheese, and a dram of Schiedam, and a pipe of tobacco to smoke. We had a

long talk about old times, and he told me how well he had got on in the world, and what great bankers he and his partners, Peanut and M'Cute (one a Scotchman, t'other a Yankee, and both a match for all the Jacobsons that ever cheated you out of ten stuyvers in the guilder) were; but when I told him that I had met with no very great luck in life, and that the hundred and fifty dollars I was going to draw was all the money I had in the world, he did not seem quite so fond of me as before. "And what do you call yourself Van Daal, brother of mine, for," says I. "It's not fair sailing. There are no more Vans in our family than in a brood of Mother Cary's chickens." At this he looks very high and mighty, and talks about different positions in society, and industry and integrity, and all the rest of it. "If that's the course you mean to steer, brother," says I, "I wish you the middle of the stream, and a clear course, and a very good morning; only take you good care that you don't run foul of some bigger craft than yourself that's really called Van, and will run you down and send you to the bottom with all hands." I was always a crusty old fellow, I dare say; but I like neither ships nor skippers that give themselves names that don't belong to them. If a ship's name is the *Mary Jane*, let her sail as the *Mary Jane*, and not as the *Highflier*. If she changes her name, ten to one there's something the matter with her. So I went back to the office, and says I to the clerk, "Now, old Nipcheese"—I called him "Nipcheese," for he looked like a kind of purser—"I want my hundred and fifty dollars—and that's what's the matter with me!" He paid me, looking as sour as

lime-juice that has been kept too long, and deducting (the stingy old screw!) four and a half per cent. for "commission;" and I went away, and spent my money like a gentleman, mostly in the grog-shops down by Greenwich Street. You may be sure that when it was all gone I didn't go for any more to my high and mighty brother, Mynheer Van Daal. No, no; I went down to the wharf, and shipped on board a brigantine bound for New Orleans. I heard afterward that my brother the banker, with his messmates, Peanut the Yankee and M'Cute the Scotchman, all went to Davy Jones's locker—that is to say, they were bankrupt, and paid nobody. Now, I should like to know which of us was in the right? If I squandered my hundred and fifty dollars (less the four and a half per cent. for commission—and be hanged to that mouldy old Nipcheese, with his copper shovel!), it was, at least, my own cash, and I had worked hard for it; but here were my fine banker-brother and his partners, who go and spend a lot of money —more than I ever heard of—that belonged to other people!

I was the third son. There was a fourth, called Cornelius, but he died when he was a baby. Then came three girls—Betje, Lotje, and Barbet. Lotje was a steady girl, who married a ship chandler at Rotterdam. He died poor, however, and left her with a lot of children. I am very fond of the yunkers, and try to be as kind to them (although I am such a crusty old fellow) as I can. Betje was a pretty girl, but too flighty, and a great deal too fond of dancing at kermesses. She died before she was eighteen of a consumption which

was brought on, I fancy, more by her going out in silk stockings and thin shoes to dance at a kermesse at the Loost Gardens of the Three Herrings at Scheveningen, than by anything else. For ours is a damp country, where there is more mud than solid earth, and more water than either; and you should take care to go as thickly shod as you can. But in winter time all is hard and firm; and with a good pair of skates to your heels, a good pipe of tobacco in your mouth (though I like a quid better), and a good flask of Schiedam in your pocket, there's no fear of your catching cold. Unfortunately, my poor Lotje could not smoke, and liked sweetmeats better than schnapps; and so, with the aid of those confounded silk stockings and dancing-pumps, she must needs die, and be buried in the graveyard of the Oude Sant Niklas Kerke. It nearly broke my poor mother's heart, and my father's, too; although he was somewhat of a hard man, whose heart took a good deal of breaking. But now that I am an old, old man, I often think over my pipe (I smoke at night instead of chewing) and my grog, about pretty Lotje, with her fair hair curled up under a scalp of gilt plating, and her great blue eyes,—of her plump white arms, and her trim little feet, which she was all too fond, poor lass! of rigging up in silk stockings and pumps. But *I* should never have a word to say against kermesses, quotha! for I must, in time, have danced away some thousands of dollars to the sound of a fiddle, and with a buxom jungvrauw for my partner, in pretty nearly all the grog-shops at pretty nearly every port on the map. For it was always my motto that when a man's

heels feel light he should forthwith begin to foot it in a hornpipe; and when he feels thirsty, and has any rhino in his locker, he should pipe all hands for grog. This, the wiseacres will tell me, is the way to ruin one's health, and die poor; but I am very old, and if I had any riches I couldn't take them away with me to Fiddler's Green, could I? Say!

My youngest sister, Barbet, was not pretty, but she was very kind, and good, and quiet, and although she had been brought up in the very strictest principles of Protestantism (that is to say, she used to get a sound whipping, as all of us did, if she went to sleep in church or forgot the text of the sermon), she took it into her head, when she grew up, to turn Romanist, and became a nun. She went away to a convent at Lille, in French Flanders (which, like Belgium, ought to belong to the Dutch), and we heard no more of her—only once, many years ago—when, for once in my life, I had made a little noise in the world by saving some poor fellow from drowning in a shipwreck, which led to the Minister of Marine sending me a gold medal and a purse full of guilders, and my name being published in the printed logs—I mean the newspapers—my poor sister Barbet (she had changed her name to Sister Veronica, I think, but that is all ship-shape in a nunnery) sent me a beautiful letter, saying that she always prayed for me, and enclosing me a pretty little image of Sant Niklas, worked in colored wools, on a bit of canvas. I was glad to hear from my sister Barbet, and to hear that Oude Sant Niklas was a Catholic as well as a Protestant saint (as a good ship, you

see, is as tight a craft under one flag as under another); and I wore the image, and wear it now, next my heart, as a charm against drowning, instead of the child's caul which I bought when I was young in High Street, Wapping, England. It cost me ten pounds, but the dealer took it out half in "swop;" that is to say, I gave him two pounds in silver, two Spanish doubloons, a five-pound note, a green parrot, that swore quite beautifully, a coral necklace, and a lot of uncut jewels, I picked up in the Black Town at Calcutta, and that must have come to about the value of ten pounds, I reckon.*

You may wonder, when I have told you of the humble way of business in which my father was, of the number of yunkers he had to keep, and all out of the slender profits of a pedler's pack, and of the poor way we lived, that we went to church, or to school, at all. But my dad was a highly respectable man, who never drank more schnapps than was good for him, except when he had the ague, which was about once every spring and autumn, and once in the winter, with, perhaps, a touch of it in the middle of the summer; and my mother was a notable housewife, who scrubbed her three rooms and her seven children, her pots and pans, and her chairs and tables, all day, and, on Saturdays, nearly all night, long. It is fortunate for such things as pots and pans, and chairs and tables, that they haven't any human feelings—at least, I never *heard* a table talk, although I have

* It would seem that the dealer in High Street, Wapping, got slightly the better of honest Jan Daal in this transaction. But business is business.—Ed.

read in the newspapers of their spinning precious long yarns for fools and madmen to listen to (but what can you expect from newspapers but lies?)—or they would have squalled for certain, as we used to do under our mother's never-ending scrubbing and scouring. When the soap got into our eyes, we used to halloa, and then she used to dry our tears with a rough towel—I mean a towel made of a bunch of twigs, tied together at one end with some string. My mother was the most excellent woman that ever lived; but she had a strange idea in her head that all children wanted physic, and that the very best doctor's stuff in the world was a birch rod, and plenty of it. Perhaps my physickings did me no harm; at least, they prepared me for the precious allowances of kicks, cuffs, and ropes-endings I got when I went to sea.

I went to sea, because, when I was about ten years old, my father thought that I had had enough schooling. *I* thought that I had had enough to last me for a lifetime; for the Reverend Pastor Slagkop had a monstrous heavy hand; but at least he had taught me to read and write, and to cast accounts—and that it was about time for me to set about earning my own livelihood, which my elder brothers were already doing. I was quite of his way of thinking, for I was a hard-working boy, and was tired of eating the bread of idleness; only my dad and I didn't exactly agree as to the precise manner by which I should earn a living. He wanted me to wander with him, mostly by treykschuyt, or canal-boat, up and down the United Provinces, helping him to carry his pack, and trying to sell the clocks, watches, cutlery, spoons, hats, caps,

laces, stockings, gloves, and garters, in which, and a hundred things besides, he traded. But I didn't like the pedler business. I was never a good hand at making a bargain, and when I had to sell things, I was just as bad a salesman. I let the customers beat me down; and then my father, who was a just man, but dreadfully severe, beat *me*. Besides, to make a good pedler, you must tell no end of lies, and the telling of lies (although sailors are often said to spin yarns as tough as the chairs and tables pretend to do) was never in my line. Again, although I was of a roving disposition, and delighted in change, my native country had no charms for me. At the seaports, where there were big ships, I was as pleased as Punch; but, inland, the country seemed to me to be always the same—flat, marshy, and stupid, with the same canals, the same canal-boats, the same windmills, the same cows, the same farmhouses, the same church steeples, the same dykes, the same dams, and the same people smoking the same pipes, or sliding to market in winter time, when the canals were frozen, on the same skates. To make an end of it, a pedler's life was to me only one degree above that of a beggar; for you had to be always asking somebody to buy your goods; and I have always hated to ask favors of people. I told my father so; but he would not hear of my turning to any trade, and there being no help for it, I had to help him at pedlering for a good two years, although I fancy that he lost more money than he gained by my lending him a hand. But, when I was twelve years of age, and feeling stouter and stronger—and I was taller for my age than most Dutch boys are—

I told my father flatly that I had had enough of pedlering, and that if he did not let me try to find some other calling, I would run away. He told me, for an ungrateful young hound as I was, that I might run away to Old Nick if I chose—not the Sant Niklas of the Oude Kerke, but a very different kind of customer. "Thank you, father," said I, beginning to tie up my few things in a bundle. "Stop," says he. "Here's five guilders for you. I don't want you to starve for the first few days, while you are seeking for work, graceless young calf as you are!"—"Thank you, father, again," I says, pocketing both the guilders and the compliment. "And stop again, my man," he says; "and take this along with you, with my blessing, for your impudence!" With this, he seizes me by the collar, gets my head between his legs, and, with the big leathern strap he used to bind his pack with, he gives me the soundest thrashing I ever had in my life. That's the way to harden boys! It was in the middle of January, and pretty sharp weather, when we had this explanation. It was at our home at Amsterdam; and my good mother sat crying bitterly in a corner, with my little sisters clinging to her, and squalling; but as I walked out of the house forever, I felt as hot all through me as though it had been the middle of July.

I walked from Amsterdam to Rotterdam steadily, bent upon going to sea. Of course, I had never as yet made a voyage, even in a fishing-boat; but I had been up and down all the canals in Holland ever since I was a child; and I fancied that the ocean was only a very large canal, and that a sea-going ship was only a very big treykschuyt.

In a large port like Rotterdam I thought that there would be no difficulty in finding a craft, the skipper of which would give me a berth aboard; and, indeed, throughout a very long life I have usually found that it does not matter a stuyver how poor, ignorant, and friendless a boy may be, there is always room for him at sea, if he sets his mind steadily on finding a ship. Mind, I don't say that he won't be the better sailor for the book-learning he may have been lucky enough to pick up. I never despised book-learning, although no great scholar myself; but a boy should learn to use his hands as well as his eyes. He should have a trade, never mind what it is; but it must be a trade that he can earn pay, and lay a little prize-money by, now and then; and a scholar without a trade is but a poor fellow. He may turn parson, or schoolmaster, to be sure; but it would be a mighty queer ship, I reckon, aboard which the captain was a parson, and the bo'sun a schoolmaster, and the crew a pack of loblolly-boys, with their brains full of book-learning, and nothing else.

I wasn't so very quick, though, as I thought, in my boyish foolishness, that I should be, in finding a ship at Rotterdam. Indeed, when I got down to the Boompjes, and boarded the craft lying at anchor there, I think I must have tried five-and-twenty before I could find a skipper who would as much as look at me, much less offer me a berth. "If you please, do you want a boy?" was my invariable question. Some of the skippers said that they had more boys than they knew what to do with; others, that boys were more trouble than they were worth, which worth did not amount to

the salt they ate. Off the poop of one ship I was kicked by a skipper, who had had too much Schiedam for breakfast; from the gangway of another I was shoved ashore by a quartermaster, who didn't like boys; one bo'sun's mate gave me a starting with a rope's-end, as he swore that I had come aboard to steal something; and another pulled my ears quite good-naturedly (although he made my ears very sore), and told me to go back to school, and mind my book, and that a sailor's life was too rough for me. There was one captain—he was in the China trade—who said that he would take me as a 'prentice if my father would pay a hundred and fifty guilders for my indentures; and another, who offered to ship me as cook's mate; but I knew nothing about cooking, and had to tell him so, with tears in my eyes. I was nearly reduced to despair, when one skipper—he was only the master of a galliot, trading between Rotterdam and Yarmouth, in England—seeing that I was a stout, bright-eyed lad, likely to be a strong haul on a rope, and a good hand at a winch or a windlass, told me that he would take me on first for one voyage, and see what wages I was worth when we came back again. He advanced me a guilder or two, to buy some sea-going things; so that, with the trifle my father had given me, when he dismissed me with his blessing and a thrashing, I did not go to sea absolutely penniless.

I have been at sea sixty years; yet well do I recollect the first day that I shipped on board the galliot *Jungvrauw*, at Rotterdam, bound for Great Yarmouth, England. When I got on board the vessel was just wearing out of port, and, thinking

that about the best thing I could do was to begin to make myself useful at once, I tailed on to a rope that some of the crew were hauling in; and the next thing I began to learn was to coil a rope. There's only two ways to do it—a right one and a wrong one. The right way is to coil it the way the sun goes round. And then I learned that about the surest manner in which a young sailor can get a knowledge of his trade is to watch how his shipmates set about doing their work. He may be laughed at, grumbled at, or sworn at, but at last he'll learn his duty, and that's something.

If I were to tell you all the wonderful things that have happened to me, man and boy, as carpenter, bo'sun, third mate, second mate, and first mate—I never had the luck to rise to be a skipper—I am afraid that you wouldn't believe half the yarns I could spin for you. I've been in both the Indies, and in both the Americas, and in our own Dutch Colony of Java, and in China and Japan (where the Dutch used to have a mighty fine factory) over and over again. I've been in action; and was wounded once by a musket-ball, which passed right through the nape of my neck. I've been a prisoner of war, and I was once nearly taken by a Sallee rover. I've had to fight with the Dutch for the French, and with the French against the Dutch, and with the Dutch for the English. I've had the yellow fever over and over again. I've had my leg half bitten off by a shark; and if anybody tells you that a shark won't eat niggers, tell him, with my compliments, that he doesn't know what he's talking about, for I saw a shark bite a nigger that had fallen overboard, right

in two, in the harbor of Havana. I don't say that the shark doesn't like white flesh best. The black man, perhaps, he looks upon as mess beef, not very prime; but the white man he considers as pork or veal, and the nicer of the two. At all events he'll eat nigger if he's hungry, and a shark's always hungry.

Perhaps the strangest thing that ever happened to me in the course of all my voyages was in connection with a lot of swallows, and I'll wind up my yarn with this one, first because it's short, and next because I think it's got something that's pretty about it, and will please the yunkers and the vrauws; and, old man-like, I always like to please *them*. It was about thirty years ago, and in the middle of September, that I signed articles at Liverpool as second mate of a brig bound to Marseilles, Barcelona, in Spain, Gibraltar (*that* belongs to the Englanders), Oran, and Algiers. The middle of September mind. The name of the brig was the *Granite*, and the skipper, Captain Marbles, a Yorkshireman, was about the hardest commander I ever sailed under. He never swore at the men,—that they wouldn't have much minded; but he was always turning up the hands for punishment; and punishment in the merchant service, thirty years ago, was little less severe than it was in the navy. Indeed, it was often more unjust, and more cruel; for when a merchant skipper flogged a man he was generally drunk, or in a fearfully bad temper; whereas on board a man-o'-war a sailor was never punished in cold blood, and had at least some show of a trial. I must do Captain Marbles the credit to say that he was never half

seas over; but on the other hand he was always in a bad temper. On me he dared not lay a finger, for I was an officer, and I would have knocked him down with a marlinspike had he struck me; but he led the foremast-men and the boys, of whom we had at least half a dozen aboard—principally, I fancy, because the Captain liked to torture boys—a terrible life. Well, we had discharged cargo at Marseilles, and taken in more at Barcelona. We had put in at Gibraltar, and after clearing out from the Rock were shaping our course with a pretty fair wind for Oran, when, one evening—now what in the world do you think happened?

The swallow, you know, is a bird that, like our stork, cannot abide the cold. He is glad enough to come and see us in summer, when the leaves are green, and the sun shines brightly; but so soon as ever the weather begins to grow chilly, off goes Mr. Swallow to the Pyramids of Egypt, or the Desert of Sahara, or some nice, warm, comfortable place of that kind. He generally arrives in our latitudes about the second week in April; and he cuts his stick again for hot winter quarters toward the end of September. I've heard book-learned gentlemen say that the birds almost always fly in a line, directly north and south, influenced, no doubt, by the magnetic current which flows forever and ever in that direction. Well, on the afternoon to which my yarn relates, our course was due south, and, just before sunset, we saw a vast space of the sky astern absolutely darkened by the largest flight of birds I ever saw, winging their way together. As a rule, I've been told, the swallows don't migrate in large flocks, but in small families. This,

however, must have been an exception to the rule, for they appeared absolutely to number thousands; and what should they do when they neared us but settle down in their thousands on the masts and rigging of the brig *Granite*. They were tired, poor things, no doubt, with long flying; and I have been told that it is a common custom for them to rest themselves on the riggings of ships. But there were so many of them this time that the very deck was covered with them, and vast numbers more fluttered below, into the forecastle and the captain's cabin. The skipper ordered the hatches to be battened down, and all was made snug for the night. In the morning the birds on the deck and the rigging were gone, but we had still hundreds of swallows in the hold and in the cabin, and the noise the poor creatures made to be let out was most pitiable—indeed, it was simply heartrending. It was like the cry of children. It sounded like, "For God's sake, let us go free!" Captain Marbles—I have said so before—was a hard man, but he could not stand the agonized twittering of the wretched little birds; and as he ordered me to have the hatches opened, I noticed that there were two great tears coursing down his stern, weather-beaten cheeks. He had, for the first time in his life, perhaps, become acquainted with a certain blessed thing called PITY. Nor did we fail to notice afterward that he was not half so hard on the boys we had aboard. Perhaps he remembered the cry of the swallows.

That's my yarn. There's nothing very grand about it; but, at least, it's true. As true, I mean, as old sailors' yarns usually are.

"Gone!" cried the doctor, as the Dutchman, a minute before solid in appearance, suddenly collapsed into air and moisture, which directly became ice. "If I hadn't been so polite I might have stopped him. I suppose the effort of telling their histories exhausts them."

"Well, sir, it's jolly interesting!" said Bostock.

"Yes, my man," said the doctor; "but there's no science in it. What is there in his talk about how he came here, or for me to report to the learned societies?"

"Can't say, I'm sure, sir," I said; "only, the discoveries."

"Yes, that will do, Captain. But come, let's find another?"

We all set to eagerly, for the men now thoroughly enjoyed the task. The stories we heard enlivened the tedium, and the men, far from being afraid now, went heartily into the search.

"Shouldn't wonder if we found a nigger friz up here, mates," said Binny Scudds.

"Or a Chine-hee," said one of the men.

"Well, all I can say," exclaimed Bostock, "is this here. *I* don't want to be made into a scientific speciment."

"Here y'are!" shouted one of the men. "Here's one on 'em!"

"Get out!" said Binny Scudds, who had run to the face of a perpendicular mass of ice, where the man stood with his pick. "That ain't one!"

"Tell yer it is," said the man. "That's the 'airs of his 'ead sticking out;" and he pointed to what appeared to be dark threads in the white, opaque ice.

"Tell you, he wouldn't be standing up," said Binny Scudds.

"Why not, if he was frozen so, my men?" said the doctor. "Yes; that's a specimen. This ice has been heaved up."

"Shall we fetch him out with powder," said Bostock.

"Dear me, no!" said the doctor. "Look! that ice is laminated. Try driving in wedges."

Three of the men climbed onto the top, and began driving in wedges, when the ice split open evenly, leaving the figure of what appeared to be a swarthy-looking Frenchman, exposed as to the face; but he was held in tightly to the lower half of the icy case, by his long hair.

"Blest if he don't look jest like a walnut with one shell off!" growled Scudds; but he was silent directly, for the Frenchman opened his eyes, stared at us, smiled, and opened his lips.

"Yes; thank you much, comrades. You have saved me. I did not thus expect, when we went drift, drift, drift north, in the little vessel, with the rats; but listen, you shall hear. I am a man of wonderful adventure. You take me for a ghost?"

Bostock nodded.

"Brave lads! brave lads!" said the Frenchman; "but it is not that I am. I have been taken for a ghost before, and prove to my good friends that I am not. I prove to you I am not; but a good, sound, safe, French *matelot!*—sailor, you call it."

"I should like to hear you," said Binny Scudds, in a hoarse growl.

"You shall, my friend, who has helped to save me."

"Let it be scientific, my friend," said the doctor.

"It shall, sir—it shall," said the Frenchman.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRENCH SAILOR'S YARN.

I AM master of the yacht *Zéphire;* at least I was her master. A hundred fathoms of green water roll over her masts now. Fishes of monstrous shape feed on our good stores. For anything I know, a brood of young sea-serpents is at this moment in possession of my hammock. Let be, I will tell the story of the *Zéphire.* Ten years ago an American vessel lay off the little port of Bénévent, in the south of France. The time was high noon; the month, August. The day was bright. The sunbeams danced over the white spray and green waves. A boat put off for the shore. I, Pierre Crépin, sat in the stern and held the rudder-lines. My heart was full of joy. I had been born in Bénévent; my friends were there—if they were alive. My mother, with good Aunt Lisette, in the little cottage by the hill-side. My old companions drinking white wine at "The Three Magpies." All the old faces I knew—had known from childhood—loved better than anything else in the world. I could throw a stone to where they sat. I could almost hear them talk. "Pull, my comrades, pull!" I grow impatient; I, the lost found; I, the dead returned to life; I, Pierre Crépin, back in Bénévent. Who will believe it? For some time

I must seem the ghost of myself. My old companions will put down their glasses and stare. Then they will fill them to the brim and drink the health of Pierre Crépin, till the rooftree of "The Three Magpies" echoes with "Pierre—Pierre Crépin, welcome back!" And my mother, she will know the footsteps of her son on the pebbles. She will rush out to fold me to her heart. And good Aunt Lisette! She is feeble—it will be almost too much for her. And——

The boat's keel grates harshly on the shingle. "Steady!" say the seamen. I make my adieux tenderly, for they have been too kind to me. I wring their hands; I leap ashore. They go back to their ship. I turn my steps first to the little whitewashed cottage on the hill-side.

Is it necessary for me to tell how my mother embraces me. Poor Aunt Lisette! She knows I am back; but she is not here to welcome me. She is at rest. At last I have told all. It is night now, and I am free to go to the kitchen of "The Three Magpies."

There it is. "Mon Dieu!" "Impossible; it is his ghost!" I soon convince them that it is, indeed, I myself. The news spreads over the market-place. "Pierre Crépin is come back to Bénévent. After all, he is not drowned; he is alive and well." The kitchen of "The Three Magpies" will not hold the crowd. Antoine, the drawer, cannot pull the corks fast enough. My eyes fill with tears. The brave fellows are too good to me. I must tell them my story. Pouches are drawn out; pipes and cigars are lighted; glasses are filled for the twentieth time. I begin my yarn.

You see me, my good friends, safely back in Bénévent. It is four years since I parted from you. The ship in which I sailed from Marseilles was wrecked on a coral reef. All hands were lost. The last I saw alive was Marc Debois. He had seized a spar, and was struggling manfully for life. There are sharks in those seas. The waves ran high, and the foam of the breakers blinded me. I was safe on the land. I could not help Marc, but I watched him. A great wave came. It rolled on toward my feet.

There was a patch of blood on the water, mingling with the white foam of the breakers, then disappearing. Poor Marc had met his fate. All was over. I saw him no more. The spar to which he had clung was washed ashore at my feet. I was alone, wet, cold, wretched. I envied Marc. Shaking myself, I ran along the shore, to restore to my drenched limbs heat and life. Then I climbed a precipitous crag—one of a line that stretched along the shore as far as the eye could see. But I must not become tedious with my tale.

"Go on, Pierre Crépin!" they all cried.

Well, then, I continued, the island was desolate, uninhabited. There were fruits and berries, turtles, young birds in nests. Long times of dry weather under a tropical sun. In this I made a fire day after day by rubbing sticks together till I could kindle the dry leaves. Then came seasons of wet of weeks together. In these I had no fire, and had to subsist on berries and fruits, and the eggs of sea-fowl. I was there, as it seemed, an age. It was three years. I had long given up all hope of seeing Bénévent or men again. My island

was about nine leagues round. On the highest hill, by the shore, I raised a mast. In a cleft in it I struck a piece of plank. On the plank I wrote, with white chalk—

"AU SECOURS! PIERRE CREPIN!"

This I renewed as the rains washed out my characters. At last help came. Unshaven, ragged, unkempt, I was taken on board an American vessel that had been driven by stress of weather far out of her course. And I am here.

My narrative ended, I was plied with a thousand questions, and it was not until mine host closed his doors for the night, and thrust us good-humoredly into the street, that I was able to bid my friends good-night, and turn my steps toward my mother's cottage—that cottage where the dear soul awaited me with the anxiety of a mother who has mourned her only son as lost. That cottage where the soft bed of my boyish days, spread for me, with snowy linen, by the kindest of hands, had been ready for me these three hours. But I was not unattended. My friends, some dozen of them, would see me home to my mother's door—would wring her hand in hearty congratulation at my return.

In the morning you may be sure I had plenty of callers. It was like a *levée*. They began to come before I was up, but my mother would not suffer that I should be waked. And I, who had not slept in a Christian bed for years, slept like a top, and slept it out.

I was sitting at my breakfast of cutlets, ome-

lette, and white wine, when Cécile knocked at the door of the cottage.

"Enter!" said my mother.

"Ah, Cécile!" I cried; "but not the Cécile I left at Bénévent when I went away."

For she was altered. She had grown more matronly. The loveliness of her girlhood had gone. It had given place to the more mature beauty of womanhood. What a difference four years makes to a girl!

"Pierre," she cries, "we are *so* glad to see you back! You bring us news—the news we all want—that I want."

She looked impatiently toward me. Perhaps her eyes expressed more to me than her words; for her mother was Spanish, and Cécile had her mother's great, black, saucer eyes, with their long fringe of jet lashes. Still, her look was not what I had expected to see. She wore sad-colored draperies, but she was not in mourning. Her dress was rich, of Lyons silk, and this surprised me; for her people were poor, and a sailor's widow is not always too well off at Bénévent. Seamen are, not uncommonly, judges of merchandise. Do we not trade with the Indies, and a thousand other outlandish places? In this way it came about that I involuntarily counted up the cost of Cécile's costly habit and rich lace. But this mental inventory took hardly a second—certainly, less time than it takes me to tell.

"Cécile," I said, "my poor girl, I wish that I could tell you good news. Your husband sailed with me. It was his lot to be one of the less lucky ones. Marc——"

"Is dead!" said Cécile, calmly. "I knew it all along—these three years. I felt it. Something told me long ago Marc was dead!"

She said this so quietly that I was astonished—perhaps a little shocked. Sailors' widows in Bénévent mourn their husbands' loss for years. My mother was a sailor's widow ever since I knew her. No offer of a new ring could ever tempt her to throw aside the old one. She was true as Love.

I replied, with something of choking in my throat, but with hardness in my face, "Marc *is* dead, Cécile! He was drowned!"—for I could not bring myself to tell this beautiful woman, whom he had loved as only an honest sailor can love, the story of his fate, as I had told it to the comrades in the kitchen of "The Three Magpies" the night before. I desired to spare her this.

"So Marc *is* dead!" Cécile repeated, impassively. "Dead—as I always thought and said he was dead! Drowned! You saw it, Pierre?"

"The good God forgive me!" I said, "I saw it!"

As I said before, I held a *levée* that day in the parlor of my mother's cottage. It gladdened my eyes, who would have worked my finger-nails below the quicks to save her from wanting anything—to see that the good soul was surrounded by the signs of plenty. She had wanted for nothing. Old Jean had tilled her piece of garden-ground to some purpose, and had never taken a sou as recompense for his work. Everybody had been kind to her. It brought tears into my eyes to hear of it. Her kitchen told a tale of plenty. From the smoke-blackened oak beams hung hams and flitches of ba-

con more than one would take the trouble to count. Bunches of garlic and strings of onions were there in plenty; and the great black kettle hanging always over the pine-wood fire, sent forth savory steams, that made your heart leap into your mouth. The Widow Crépin's was a *pot-au-feu* worth eating, I can tell you. Nor did we fail to wash down our food with draughts of good wine on every day of the week. I gave a supper that night to some of my friends. I had not quite forgotten the impression Cécile had made upon me in the morning. For Marc, the second officer, had been my friend ever since I could recollect sweetstuff. But we were merry together, talking of the old times, of my adventures in the desert island, of the good ship that had brought me safely back to Bénévent, and of other things.

Presently the name of Cécile was mentioned.

I shuddered involuntarily.

I knew bad news was coming from the tone of the speakers.

I guessed what it would be, and blew angry clouds from my long wooden pipe.

"Pierre—Pierre Crépin, has Cécile Debois been here to see you?"

"She has. She was here this morning."

"She is well off!" said one.

"She has to want for nothing!" said another.

And they shook their heads wisely, as those do who know more than they say.

"What of Cécile?" I asked, with somewhat of anger in my tone.

"Do you not know?"

"Did she not tell you?"

"I know she is poor Marc's widow. She told me nothing."

"Ah, ah! She wanted the news of Marc's death! She will be married to M. André, the merchant! There has this long while been a talk of them in Bénévent, and, for the matter of that, for miles round!"

"M. André!" I cried. "But he is elderly—old enough to be her father!"

"'Old men—old fools,' as the saying is!" put in Father Lancrac. He was old enough to know. I did not gainsay him. It is well to treat one's elders with respect. And old M. Lancrac, my mother's good friend and kinsman, was in his dotage. Besides, now others aimed their darts at her, I felt inclined to excuse Cécile.

"It is well," I said. "Women marry again in Bénévent, I suppose, as anywhere else in the world. Why not Cécile?"

Hearing me say this, and marking some sternness in my tone, they all said, "Ay, ay! Why not? She is a fine woman, and is to make a good match that we all ought to be proud of! Poor Marc is dead!" And so forth.

We puffed our pipes some time in silence, those of us who smoked. The others counted my mother's hams and flitches of bacon, and the strings of onions throwing flickering shadows in the lamplight But old age will not be silent.

Father Lancrac said, for his part, he wished he was Merchant André. He would marry again. Who would have him? He was better than most of the young ones now.

And the women folk laughed.

Lawyers are adroit. After this, the notary, Gaspard, who had honored us with his company—he had known my father—turned the conversation. He asked me questions about my adventures in the island, my mode of life, how I counted time, my subsistence, and such things. In this way our evening passed away, and we parted, as good friends should part—merry.

But it happened sooner than I had expected. Cécile and M. André were married a fortnight after. That was a scene, indeed, which will not soon be forgotten. The bride looked lovely, and M. André, worthy man, wore an appearance ten years younger than his real age, he was so happy.

Madame André! I thought of her as the wife of my old comrade, Marc. I recalled the humble nuptials of six years before. I seemed to see her as she stood before us then—girlish, beautiful, graceful, in her home-made bridal gown. Now her own friends were not grand enough to be bidden to the feast. But M. André's well supplied their place. We, however, were permitted to look on—to cheer, huzza, and wish them both joy.

Her mother's house was too small for her to be married from. She was taken to the Mairie by her second spouse from the house of one of his relatives; and, in her white dress and veil, she looked more dazzlingly lovely than any woman I had ever seen.

After the ceremonial at the church, there was a *dejeuner*, to which all the best people of Bénévent were invited. The newly married pair were to spend their honeymoon at a château of M. André's,

some three leagues from Bénévent, in the hills, overlooking the sea. A carriage and pair of horses, with a postilion in a gay jacket, waited to take them there. Round the carriage, on the footway and in the road, was a crowd of people, curious to see all that there was to be seen, and desirous of giving bride and bridegroom "God-speed!" when they drove off.

I passed the place by accident, for I had not intended to be there. I had taken my stout stick in my hand, meaning to try a walk up the hills, by the coach road.

By chance I had passed the house where the bride and bridegroom were breakfasting. By chance I had found myself one of the crowd. A crowd impresses upon one its sympathies. I loitered among them—not long;—long enough to see a man, with a beard and tanned face, hurriedly asking some questions. I could not get near him for the people. Then, as hurriedly, he strode away, with great, heavy strides.

The face I did not know—I had caught but a hurried glance of it; but the broad shoulders, the strong limbs, the walk of the man, I did know.

A terrible feeling came over me.

My knees trembled under me.

My face was white as paper.

I could have fallen to the ground.

For I knew the walk was the walk of Marc!

And these three years he had been dead!

With the emotions called forth by this untimely apparition, do you suppose that I remained in the crowd in the narrow street?—that I desired to "huzza!" as M. André and Cécile drove away? I

was stifled. I wanted air—to breathe—to breathe! I sought it, by turning my steps to the hills as fast as my trembling limbs would carry me.

It was the road HE had taken.

Should I see him again?

I gathered strength. I walked fast—faster. I ran till I was out of breath. I stopped and sat down on a great moss-grown stone.

A lovely landscape spread out below me. It was years since I had seen it. The rivers flowing through a champagne country to the sea. The white houses and thatched roofs of the villages: the red-brick streets of Bénévent. How well I knew it all! It recalled memories of the past. The thought flashed upon me in an instant.

The last time I was here was with Marc. We desired again to take our walk—to see our old haunts of bird's-nesting and berry-gathering. It was the day before he married Cécile.

I rose, wiped the perspiration from my brow, and continued my ascent. I reached the highest level of the coach road, where, for half a league, it takes its course through a narrow defile between two precipitous hills, whose rocky sides no time can change. I looked back.

The open carriage containing Cécile and her husband I could see on the road, far in the distance. They were driving at a good pace. "They will pass me in the defile," I said, and hurried on. Why, I knew not. Presently the sound of wheels on the soft, sandy road was plain enough to the ear.

Nearer and nearer came the rumble. There were some juniper bushes of giant growth a little

further on the road. It was a question which would reach them first, the chaise or I.

I had the start; but horses are quicker on their legs than men.

As it turned out, we reached them almost together. I was slightly in advance, however.

The road here was very narrow. Two vehicles could hardly pass. I took to the rough grass. Pushing aside the boughs of a bush that was directly in my path, and intending to take my stand before it, and wave my hat as the carriage passed, I came suddenly upon—Marc!

It was he!

He stood with a wild fire of jealousy in his eyes, his hat on the grass beside him; his arm raised, a pistol in his hand, his finger on the trigger!

It was a supreme moment.

My courage did not desert me. I was calm.

The carriage was passing.

I made a dash at his arm, to strike the weapon from his hand. I stumbled and fell at his feet. Instantly I looked up. I wished to shout, but my tongue refused its office. It was glued, parched, to the roof of my mouth. There would be murder! Cécile would be killed—and by Marc! My eyes were riveted on the trigger of his pistol! He pulled it! There was a tiny flash—a tiny puff! No more! The weapon had missed fire. We were concealed by the bushes. The carriage drove by at a rapid pace. Cécile was saved for the time!

I gave a sigh of relief. Then came upon me the feeling of wonder that Marc was back. Marc,

whom I had seen three years before to meet with his end—whom I had mourned as dead.

All this flashed across my mind in an instant. I rose to my knees, to my feet. I placed my hand on his arm. I looked into his eyes. His face was changed; there was terrible emotion in it.

"Marc," I said, as quietly and with as much self-command as I could summon.

He suffered my hand to remain on his shoulder, and continued to look in the direction the chaise had taken; toward M. André's château. We stood thus a second or so. Then, turning upon me, he gasped, in low, choked, guttural accents of reproach and of the deepest despair, "Cécile! Cécile!"

What could I say? My conscience smote me heavily. I had told my best friend's wife that her husband was dead! That I knew it—had seen him meet his death! And upon my testimony she had acted. Marc and M. André—she was the wife of both! It was terrible to witness the agony of the wretched man. It was not for me to break in upon that sacred passion of grief.

"Cécile!" he murmured, as the pistol dropped from his hand, and he sank fainting in my arms.

I placed him gently on the rough grass by the roadside, raising his head, and loosening the collar of his shirt.

For an hour he remained in a swoon, broken only by incoherent cries, that at rare intervals fashioned themselves into language. Then it was always "Cécile!"

I had a flask of brandy in my pocket. I got water from a little mountain spring close by. I

bathed my poor comrade's temples, and gave him a reviving draught of the spirit and water. I rubbed his cold hands, and beat them, to restore him to consciousness.

At last he came to. How can I describe my joy when I found that he was, to all appearance, sane. For the attempt to shoot the unfortunate woman was the act of a madman. That attempt had happily been frustrated. What was now to be done? You will see, from my coolness and presence of mind in this danger, that I am able to act in an emergency. While Marc lay swooning on the grass by my side, I had had time to think. My course, my duty, were alike clear to me. I had been innocently—though I can never forgive myself—the cause of Cécile's second marriage. I must not conceal this from Marc. My shoulders are broad. The truth must be told. I must tell it.

"Just now, Marc," I said, shaking him gently by the hand, "you were not Marc Debois. You were a madman intent on murder—the murder of her whom he loved best in the world!"

"Name her not!" he burst out, throwing up his head and pressing his hands to his eyes; "faithless—false wretch!"

"Through me."

"Through you?"

"Listen. A fortnight ago I was put ashore at Bénévent, after three years' existence, for I will not call it life, in that island, on whose shores I thought I saw you swallowed up by the sharks. Cécile——"

He started back a few paces from me at the mention of her name.

I continued, however.

"Cécile came to me; questioned me. I told her you were dead. It is my fault. You see, Marc, all the fault is mine. She had been faithful to her marriage vow, till certain news of your death reached her. Then she was free to marry. Alas! that mine was the tongue that gave her the freedom!"

"Curse you, Pierre Crépin!"

He was becoming terribly excited. I begged him to be calm.

"I am a man, Marc. I can die like one. If you were reasonable, you would know that I have always been your good friend. You are unreasonable——"

"I *am* unreasonable? I shall live only for vengeance! First, I will kill you; then graybeard André; then—then her!"

"And then, Marc?"

"Myself!"

"You have your pistol. I have no weapon. You will not shoot me in cold blood? That is not Marc Debois, even now!"

"Fetch one!" he shouted, imperatively. "No! Stay! I cannot trust you! We will draw lots for this!"

It was useless to reason, to expostulate, to advise. He was mad. It remained to fight. I commended the issue to Providence, and prayed that neither of us, unfit for death, miraculously saved and brought back to the sound of human voices, might fall.

He pulled two bents from a tuft of the mountain grass growing on a hillock near us—one

shorter, one longer,—and presented them to me for choice.

"You can trust me!" he said, with a wildly ironical smile.

To hesitate was to be shot in cold blood. I felt this, and acted with resolution.

"I can trust you, Marc."

"Short fires first!"

I pulled, and drew the short bent.

He took a cap from a small cylindrical metal case he carried in his pocket, and fixed it on the nipple of his pistol. Then he handed the weapon to me.

I took it from him, examined it with the greatest care—I see it now; it was an old-fashioned firearm of Spanish make,—stood a pace only back from him, fixed my eye on his, with a sudden jerk flung the pistol fifty paces behind me, and throwing myself upon Marc, bore him to the ground, and held him there in a vice!

Then began our struggle for life!

At first, the advantage was mine. I was a-top. In strength we had always been pretty equally matched. Sometimes I had been able to throw Marc, sometimes he had thrown me. Now the contest was unequal. It is true I had the advantage of fighting for life, but the struggle was with the supernatural strength of a madman. I had dropped my stick before taking the pistol from the hand of Marc. In this tussle it would have been of no service to me. This was man to man.

I pinned mad Marc to the ground, my hands on his arms, my knees on his chest. He writhed, and tore, and struggled under me. No word was

spoken between us. The advantage was with me. Thus we continued for what seemed an immense length of time—for what was, perhaps, a quarter of an hour. It was an incessant struggle with us both; with me to keep Marc Debois down—with Marc to master me.

I felt my strength giving way. My joints were stiffening, my fingers becoming numb with the pressure. Besides this, I was in a profuse sweat, caused by the violent exertion, and partly by the alarm at what would happen if I should, in turn, be under the giant frame of Marc. It was to the accident of throwing him first, by my sudden and unexpected attack, that I owed the last fifteen minutes of my life. If I spoke, I found it made him more violent in his efforts to master me. I thought the sound of my voice maddened him the more.

My brain seemed clogged. At first, thought had followed thought with painful rapidity. My life had passed before me in panoramic procession. Now I had a novel feeling, such as I had never experienced before. Was I—the thought was terrible! — was I, under the horrible fascination of Marc's eye—losing my reason? I made an effort to think. To rouse myself I multiplied fifteen by sixty. Nine hundred—nine hundred seconds of my life had passed in this fearful struggle with a madman! How many more seconds had I to live? How much longer could I hold my own? Not long! I was rapidly becoming exhausted. I commended myself to the Almighty.

Hark! wheels—coming.

Marc hears the sound, too. I am weak now. He makes one gigantic effort. I am overcome.

His great fingers fasten with a desperate clutch upon my throat. He will tear out my gullet.

I become insensible.

When I come to myself I am seated on the box of the carriage which had conveyed Cécile and M. André to the château. It had passed us on its way back.

We are near Bénévent.

It is three strong men's work inside the chaise to restrain Marc and keep him from murdering them.

We drive to the office of police. A little crowd follows us. I am able to give some formal evidence. Then I am taken home. The unfortunate man is placed under proper restraint. There is a great buzz of excitement in Bénévent.

Nobody recognizes Marc; he is so changed. I do not disclose his name. It is better to wait the course of events.

After the fearful peril of the last hour, I am astonished to find myself alive. I am alive, and thankful.

After the struggle in the defile I was unable to leave my bed for some days. I had been much tried both in mind and body; but I received the kindest attention from the good friends around me.

In these little places every trifle creates a mighty stir. All Bénévent came to inquire after my health. I had been killed. No; well, then, nearly done to death by a murderous assassin escaped from the galleys. The police knew him. It was the same man who five years before had

attempted the life of the Emperor. He had a homicidal mania. There were a hundred different reports—none of them true.

I was examined and re-examined; examined again, and cross-examined. You have formed the conclusion that I am a witness, if I choose, out of whom not much can be got. I baffled the Maire, the prefect, the police. I had been attacked by a man who carried a pistol, and I was rescued by some persons returning from M. André's château in a chaise. What could be more simple? And these are the facts duly entered—wrapped in plenty of official verbiage—in police record.

I had everybody's sympathy. I had something better. Sympathy one can't spend; francs one can. A subscription was raised for my benefit. I was compelled to accept the money—a thousand francs of it. The rest—some odd hundreds of francs and a bundle of warm clothing, intended for me by some Bénévent valetudinarian, together with thirteen copies of religious books and two rosaries —I presented to the curé for distribution among the poor of his parish.

But I had a weight on my mind even francs could not remove—Marc and Cécile.

She, poor woman, was happy in being rich; in having fine dresses and gaiety; in being an old man's idol. It is so with women. She was, I found, the donor of some of the religious books and of one of the two rosaries. Perhaps, then, at the château all was not happiness for the mistress. At times she still mourned for Marc.

And Marc?

After months of the greatest anxiety on my part,

lest in his ravings he should betray himself, he was happily restored to reason.

The doctor said it happened through his seeing me.

He knew me as I sat in the room with him. His keepers said he had raved always of "Cécile, Cécile!" What of it? It led to no suspicion of his identity with Marc Debois. Are there not hundreds of Céciles?

The wretched man's memory was a blank. As I had done him a most terrible injury, I tried to repair—in some slight degree—to atone.

He was lodged with me in my dear mother's cottage. I used to lead him about like a child. I took him every day to the sea to see the shipping. This by degrees brought back his memory of his profession.

At last all came back, save the scene in the defile. He told me he had also been on a desolate island. Whether the same as mine, or an adjacent desert, I shall never know. A ship took him off, too, and landed him at Marseilles. He tramped it to Bénévent, and arrived there in time to see Cécile just married to M. André.

No wonder that his mind gave way.

He implored my forgiveness.

I implored his.

He was silent, sullen. No one knew his name. I explained that he was an old shipmate. This hardly satisfied the people. At Bénévent they love a mystery.

Marc solved it for them. He disappeared, without saying good-by. I guessed that he had gone to sea again.

He had said, the night before he left us, "Pierre, I will not wreck her life as she has wrecked mine. I will not seek her; but God save her if she crosses my path in this life."

I was right; he had gone to sea. I got a letter a week after, with the Marseilles postmark on it.

"I am mate of the *Lépante,*" Marc said.

Months had passed since their marriage—about a year. Cécile was a mother. She called upon me in her carriage one day. A nurse was in attendance upon her, carrying in her arms a little child. It was a girl, two months old. Cécile was proud; but M. André chuckled incessantly, as old cocks will. I, with my terrible secret, could hardly bear to look at her.

"You are not friendly with me now, M. Crépin," she said; "not as you used to be. I desire to keep all my old friends, and to make as many new ones as I can."

I replied as well as I could; for I was thinking of Madame Debois, and not of Madame André, as she was now called.

"I have come to ask a favor. Say you will grant it me?"

Like a Frenchman, I bowed complaisantly.

Cécile went on, like a Frenchwoman, flatteringly, "Pierre—for I will call you by the old name; I like it best—I cannot be so stiff with an old friend as to keep calling you Monsieur Crépin; but, if you will let me, I will call you Captain Crépin."

Again I bowed, slightly mystified.

"Captain Crépin, you are—you are brave. All

Bénévent knows it. You are an able and experienced seaman."

"Madame is too good."

"Not a bit," put in my mother, who would have heard me called angel with pleasure.

"I love the sea. M. André does not; but he humors me in everything. I have made him buy a fine yacht—large, strong, swift, of English build. You have seen her. I have called her the *Zéphire*. She lies in the harbor there, and wants a captain and a crew. You must be the captain, P-i-e-r-r-e!"

You know how women wheedle—handsome, especially?

"This summer," continued Cécile, "we intend to cruise north. I long to see new countries. I am tired of life here. I long to skim over the waves and feel the cool breezes of northern seas."

"Madame, I will consider. I must have time. You must give me time."

"You will not refuse me—nobody would. I shall feel safe only with you in command of our yacht. What answer shall I give M. André, who is all impatience to know?"

"I will answer myself to M. André to-morrow."

When she was gone, my good mother pressed me to go—though she would a thousand times rather have kept me at home. But she knew that it is necessary for a man to be doing something. Ah, she is a woman, indeed!

"This will be an easy berth, Pierre," she said. "You will be at home with me here all the winters, with the *Zéphire* safely laid up in dock."

The next day I called upon M. André at his office.

"I accept the command of your yacht, monsieur," I said. "I shall always do my best for you, I hope."

The wages were liberal. I was to choose a crew of picked men—all old sailors.

"We wish to sail in a week," said M. André. "Can you be ready by then?"

"I can," was my answer.

It was not the wheedling of Cécile; it was not my mother's urging me; it was not the beautiful yacht of M. André's, nor his good wages, that made me decide to become captain of the *Zéphire*.

It was because the *Lépante* had gone north.

The *Zéphire* was as fine a craft as ever seaman handled. She was perfect, from keel to mast, from bow to stern.

Those English know how to build ships.

I had under me a crew of six picked men. We had, besides, a cook, a real *chef*, for M. André was something of a *gourmet*, and would have the hand of an artist in his dishes, not the bungling of a scullion.

Monsieur and Madame, with the little Cécile and their servants, came on board on Sunday morning, as the people were going to mass; for we would sail on a seaman's lucky day. We weighed anchor. There was wind enough in the bay to fill our new white sails. All went without a hitch: we were off!

We had two months of the finest weather. Cécile's cheeks wore new color, and her black eyes sparkled with delight, as we sped along ten knots an hour. M. André was not dissatisfied. He saw Madame pleased. That is something for an

elderly husband. He dined well, and he slept undisturbed under an awning on deck, or in his cabin. But this could not last forever. We were three days from the last port we had touched at, in a northerly latitude, and I could see we were going to have some weather. The sunset was angry; black clouds rose; the wind freshened into a stiff breeze. M. André called it an infernal gale.

The sea became rough for a landsman; and Monsieur not unnaturally felt squeamish. Dinner was served under difficulties that evening, and Monsieur could not taste even the soup.

I took every precaution. Sails were reefed, and all was made taut.

"Bad weather coming, sir!" said my mate.

"Do you think so?" I answered, not wishing my own opinion to get to the ears of Cécile, as she would be frightened enough before morning.

But I stepped aft, and told M. André. The brave merchant groaned, and wished he was in bed at Bénévent. But wishing will not take one there.

It was in the small hours. We men were all on deck. We were driving along at a fearful rate under bare poles. The waves were huge mountains. The storm raged with fury. The night was pitchy dark. Thunder and lightning did not serve to make things more agreeable. Not a seaman on board had ever seen such a night. It was necessary to lash oneself to the vessel to avoid being washed overboard.

Of a sudden there was a terrific crash!

The women below shrieked and prayed.

The *chef* wanted to jump overboard.

M. André cried, "We have struck on a rock! We are lost!"

"Have courage!" I cried. "Fetch the women on deck. There is not an instant to be lost. The yacht is filling!"

We had come into collision with a large vessel. I could see her lights. She had just cleared us. A flash of blue lightning showed me the name painted in white letters on her stern.

She was the *Lépante*, of Marseilles.

There was a lull in the storm.

There remained one chance for life—to get on board the vessel. The yacht was filling fast, and in a few minutes would settle down.

Except one or two tried sailors—old comrades of mine—everybody on board was paralyzed.

It was for me to act—to choose for all.

The choice was—Death or the *Lépante*.

I chose the *Lépante*.

A Frenchman stays at the post of duty.

As captain, I was responsible for the lives of all on board. I was, therefore, the last to leave the sinking *Zéphire*. Cécile was hoisted up the side of the *Lépante* first. I heard a shriek. In the just-beginning twilight I could see two figures.

A man's and a woman's. I knew them.

Marc had raised Cécile on to the deck of the *Lépante*, and had recognized her, and she him.

The horrors of the storm, of the shipwreck, the prospect of death, were to me as nothing to this meeting.

Marc and Cécile!

In a few seconds I was safe on the deck of the *Lépante.*

M. André, the crew, the spectators, were horrorstruck.

A man goes mad in an instant. Marc was again raving, as he had raved in the madhouse at Bénévent. But the sight of Cécile had given purpose to his language.

"Vengeance—vengeance! Fiend! The time has come! Fate—fate has brought us together! I could not escape you! I must kill you—kill you! We must be damned together! Hark at the roar of the waters! Hark at the wailing of the winds! Our shroud!—our dirge!—our requiem! that tells us of hell! for I am a murderer, and you——"

He had the strength of ten strong men.

It took that number to hold him.

The wretched André fell prone in a swoon.

Cécile's women called on the Virgin and the saints.

We all held Marc.

Cécile turned upon me.

"You told me he was dead," she said.

Then, to the captain of the *Lépante*—"I am innocent—innocent—innocent!"

But, in moments of supreme danger, men's ears are deaf to other people's business.

It was save himself who can.

A leak had been sprung in the *Lépante* by the collision with our yacht. The pumps could not hold their own with the waters.

There was a panic on board.

The storm had abated. The boats were got ready. All rushed to them.

"I MUST KILL YOU—KILL YOU!"

"*Place aux dames!*" I cried; and, with the spasmodic strength of great crises, I held back the men, and got the women off first. Then men enough to take charge of the boat.

M. André was in it; the first that was lowered. Another followed, filled with the crew of the *Lépante*. Her captain was the first to leap into it.

And Marc, freed from the arms that held him, dashed over the side into the foaming waters, to swim after Cécile.

His vengeance was not in this world.

As for me, I was left alone on the *Lépante*—with the rats.

I am a sailor, and have a sailor's prejudices, fears, hopes, beliefs.

I saw the rats. They had not left the ship. I accepted the omen. I knew the *Lépante* was not doomed, if they stayed.

To take to such a sea in an open boat seemed certain death.

I preferred to stay with my friends, the rats.

Rudderless, dismasted, we still floated.

And drifted—drifted—drifted—

Northward, into the ice.

Into the ice-bound, ice-bearing sea that is round the North Pole.

I know no more.

"Gone again, sir!" I said, for just as the doctor made a lurch at the Frenchman, he melted away like the others.

"I never knew anything so provoking," cried the doctor. "But never mind, we must find another, and keep to my old plan—cut him out in a block,

and take him home frozen, like a fly in amber. What a sensation!"

"What! being friz?" said Scudds.

"No, my man. What a sensation it will make at the Royal Society, when I uncover my specimen, pointing to it like a huge fly in amber. It will be the greatest evening ever known."

He gave us no peace till we found another specimen, which we did, and cut out by rule, and at last had it lying there by the tent, as clear as glass, and the doctor was delighted.

"Not a very handsome specimen, doctor," I said, looking through the ice at a lean, long, ugly Yankee, lying there like a western mummy, with his eyes shut, and an ugly leer upon his face, just as if he heard what we said, and was laughing at us.

"No, not handsome, Captain, but a wonderful specimen. We must give up the North Pole, and go back to-morrow. I wouldn't lose that specimen for worlds."

I gave my shoulders a shrug like the Frenchman did, and said nothing, though I knew we could never get that block over the ice, even if it did not melt.

Just then I saw the doctor examining the glass, and before long a most rapid thaw set in. The surface ice was covered with slushy snow, and for the first time for days we felt the damp cold horribly, huddling together round the lamp, and longing for the frost to set in once more.

We had not stirred outside for twelve hours, a great part of which had been spent in sleep, when suddenly the doctor exclaimed—

"Why, it will be thawed out!"

"What will?" I said.

"My specimen!" he exclaimed.

"Here it is!" I said; and we all started, in spite of being used to such appearances; for just then the tent opening was dragged aside, and the tall Yankee, that we had left in the ice slab, came discontentedly in, and just giving us a nod, he stood there staring straight before him in a half-angry, spiteful way.

I never could have believed that tobacco would have preserved its virtue so long, till I saw that tall, lean, muscular Yankee begin slowly to wag his jaw in a regular grind, grind, grind; when, evidently seeing their danger, our men backed away. For our friend began coolly enough to spit about him, forming a regular ring, within which no one ventured; and at last, taking up his position opposite the lamp, he would have put it out in about a couple of minutes, had not the doctor slewed him round, when, facing the wind, we all set to wondering at the small brown marbles that began to fall, and roll about on the ice, till we saw that it was freezing so hard again that the tobacco-juice congealed as it left his lips.

"I like grit—I do like a fellow as can show grit!" he kept on muttering in a discontented kind of way, as he took a piece of pine wood out of his pocket, and then, hoisting a boot like a canoe upon his knee, he sharpened his knife, and began to whittle.

"Where did you get that piece of wood?" said the doctor, then.

The Yankee turned his head slowly, spat a brown hailstone on to the ice, and then said—

"Whar did I get that thar piece o' wood, stranger? Wall, I reckon that's a bit o' Pole—North Pole—as I took off with these here hands with the carpenter's saw."

"I'll take a piece of it," said the doctor, and turning it over in his hands, "Ha, hum!" he muttered; "*Pinus silvestris.*" Then aloud—"But how did you get up here, my friend?"

"Wall, I'll tell you," drawled the Yankee. "But I reckon thar's yards on it; and when I begin, I don't leave off till I've done, that I don't, you bet—not if you're friz. Won't it do that I'm here?"

"Well, no," said the doctor; "we should like to know how you got here."

"So," said the Yankee sailor, and, drawing his legs up under him, firing a couple of brown hailstones off right and left, and whittling away at so much of the North Pole as the doctor had left him, he thus began.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YANKEE SAILOR'S YARN.

I WARN'T never meant for no sailor, I warn't; but I come of a great nation, and when a chap out our way says he'll du a thing, he does it. I said I'd go to sea, and I went—and thar you are. I said I'd drop hunting, and take to mining, and thar I was; and that's how it come about.

You see, we was rather rough out our way, where Hez Lane and me went with our bit of tent and pickers, shooting-irons, and sech-like, meaning to make a pile of gold. We went to Washoe, and didn't get on; then we went to St. Laramie, and didn't get on there. Last, we went right up into the mountains, picking our way among the stones, for Hez sez, "Look here, old hoss, let's get whar no one's been afore. If we get whar the boys are at work already, they've took the cream, and we gets the skim milk. Let's you and me get the cream, and let some o' the others take the skim milk."

"Good for you," I says; and we tramped on day arter day, till we got right up in the heart o' the mountains, where no one hadn't been afore, and it was so still and quiet, as it made you quite deaf.

It was a strange, wild sort of place, like as if one o' them coons called giants had driven a wedge into

a mountain, and split it, making a place for a bit of a stream to run at the bottom, and lay bare the gold we wanted to find.

"This'll do, Dab," says Hez, as we put up our bit of a tent on a pleasant green shelf in the steep valley place. "This'll do, Dab; thar's yaller gold spangling them sands, and running in veins through them rocks, and yaller gold in pockets of the rock."

"Then, let's call it Yaller Gulch," I says.

"Done, old hoss!" says Hez; and Yaller Gulch it is.

We set to work next day washing in the bit of a stream, and shook hands on our luck.

"This'll do," says Hez. "We shall make a pile here. No one won't dream of hunting this out."

"Say, stranger!" says a voice, as made us both jump. "Do it wash well?"

And if there warn't a long, lean, ugly, yaller-looking chap looking down at us, as he stood holding a mule by the bridle.

Why, afore a week was over, so far from us keeping it snug, I reckon there was fifty people in Yaller Gulch, washing away, and making their piles. Afore another week as over some one had set up a store, and next day there was a gambling saloon. Keep it to ourselves! Why, stranger, I reckon if there was a speck of gold anywheres within five hundred miles, our chaps 'd sniff it out like vultures, and be down upon it.

It warn't no use to grumble, and we kept what we thought to ourselves, working away, and making our ounces the best way we could. One day I proposed we should go up higher in the mountains; but Hez said he'd be darned if he'd move; and next

day, if he'd wanted me to go, I should have told him I'd be darned if I'd move; and all at once, from being red-hot chums, as would have done anything for one another, Hez and me got to be mortal enemies.

Now, look here, stranger. Did you ever keep chickens? P'r'aps not; but if you ever do, just you notice this. You've got, say, a dozen young cocks pecking about, and as happy as can be—smart and lively, an' innercent as chickens should be. Now, jist you go and drop a pretty young pullet in among 'em, and see if there won't be a row. Why, afore night there'll be combs bleeding, eyes knocked out, feathers torn and ragged—a reg'lar pepper-box and bowie set-to, and all acause of that little smooth, brown pullet, that looks on so quiet and gentle as if wondering who made the row.

Now, that's what was the matter with us; for who should come into the Gulch one day, but an old storekeeping sort of fellow, with as pretty a daughter as ever stepped, and from that moment it was all over between Hez and me.

He'd got a way with him, you see, as I hadn't; and they always made him welkim at that thar store, when it was only "How do you do?" and "Good-morning," to me. I don't know what love is, strangers; but if Jael Burn had told me to go and cut one of my hands off to please her, I'd ha' done it. I'd ha' gone through fire and water for her, God bless her! and if she'd tied one of her long, yaller hairs round my neck, she might have led me about like a bar, rough as I am.

But it wouldn't do. I soon see which way the

wind blew. She was the only woman in camp, and could have the pick, and she picked Hez.

I was 'bout starin' mad first time I met them two together—she a hanging on his arm, and looking up in his face, worshipping him like some of them women can worship a great, big, strong he; and as soon as they war got by I swore a big oath as Hez should never have her, and I plugged up my six-shooter, give my bowie a whetting, and lay wait for him coming back.

It was a nice time that, as I sot there, seeing in fancy him kissin' her sweet little face, and she hanging on him. If I was 'most mad afore, I was ten times worse now; and when I heer'd Hez comin', I stood there on a shelf of rock, where the track came along, meaning to put half a dozen plugs in him, and then pitch him over into the Gulch. But I was that mad, that when he came up cheery and singing, I forgot all about my shooting-iron and bowie, and went at him like a bar, hugging and wrastling him, till we fell together close to the edge of the Gulch, and I had only to give him a shove, and down he' ha' gone kelch on the hard rocks ninety foot below.

"Now, Hez," I says; "how about your darling now? You'll cut in afore a better man again, will yer?"

"Yes, if I live!" he says, stout-like, so as I couldn't help liking the grit he showed. "That's right," he says; "pitch me over, and then go and tell little Jael what you've done. She'll be fine and proud of yer then, Abinadab Scales!"

He said that as I'd got him hanging over the rocks, and he looked me full in the face, full of

grit, though he was helpless as a babby; but I didn't see his face then, for what I see was the face of Jael, wild and passionate-like, asking me what I'd done with her love, and my heart swelled so that I gave a sob like a woman, as I swung Hez round into safety, and taking his place like, "Shove me over," I says, "and put me out of my misery."

Poor old Hez! I hated him like pyson; but he wasn't that sort. 'Stead of sending me over, now he had the chance, he claps his hand on my shoulder, and he says, says he, "Dab, old man," he says, "give it a name, and let's go and have a drink on this. We can't all find the big nuggets, old hoss; and if I'm in luck, don't be hard on yer mate."

Then he held out his fist, but I couldn't take it, but turning off, I ran hard down among the rocks till I dropped, bruised and bleeding, and didn't go back to my tent that night.

I got a bit wild arter that. Hez and Jael were spliced up, and I allus kep away. When I wanted an ounce or two of gold, I worked, and when I'd got it, I used to drink—drink, because I wanted to drown all recollection of the past.

Hez used to come to me, but I warned him off. Last time he come across me, and tried to make friends, "Hez," I says, "keep away—I'm desprit like—and I won't say I shan't plug yer!"

Then Jael came, and she began to talk to me about forgiving him; but it only made me more mad nor ever, and so I went and pitched at the lower end of the Gulch, and they lived at t'other.

Times and times I've felt as if I'd go and plug Hez on the quiet, but I never did, though I got to

hate him more and more, and never half so much as I did nigh two years arter, when I came upon him one day sudden with his wife Jael, looking pootier than ever, with a little white-haired squealer on her arm. An' it ryled me above a bit, to see him so smiling and happy, and me turned into a bloodshot, drinking, raving savage, that half the Gulch was feared on, and t'other half daren't face.

I had been drinking hard—fiery Bourbon, you bet!—for about a week, when early one morning, as I lay in my ragged bit of a tent, I woke up, sudden-like, to a roarin' noise like thunder; and then there came a whirl and a rush, and I was swimmin' for life, half choked with the water that had carried me off. Now it was hitting my head, playful like, agen the hardest corners of the rock it could find in the Gulch; then it was hitting me in the back, or pounding me in the front with trunks of trees swept down from the mountains, for something had bust—a lake, or something high up—and in about a wink the hull settlement in Yaller Gulch was swep' away.

"Wall," I says, getting hold of a branch, and drawing myself out, "some on 'em wanted a good wash, and this 'll give it 'em;" for you see water had been skeerce lately, and what there was had all been used for cleaning the gold.

I sot on a bit o' rock, wringing that water out of my hair—leastwise, no: it was some one else like who sot there, chap 's I knowed, you see; and there was the water rushing down thirty or forty foot deep, with everything swept before it—mules, and tents, and shanties, and stores, and dead bodies by the dozen.

"Unlucky for them," I says; and just then I hears a wild sorter shriek, and looking down, I see a chap half-swimming, half-swept along by the torrent, trying hard to get at a tree that stood t'other side.

"Why, it's you, is it, Hez?" I says to myself, as I looked at his wild eyes and strained face, on which the sun shone full. "You're a gone coon, Hez, lad; so you may just as well fold yer arms, say amen, and go down like a man. How I could pot you now, lad, if I'd got a shooting-iron; put you out o' yer misery like. You'll drown, lad."

He made a dash, and tried for a branch hanging down, but missed it, and got swept against the rocks, where he shoved his arm between two big bits; but the water gave him a wrench, the bone went crack, and as I sat still there, I see him swept down lower and lower, till he clutched at a bush with his left hand, and hung on like grim death to a dead nigger.

"Sarve yer right," I says coolly. "Why shouldn't you die like the rest? If I'd had any go in me I should have plugged yer long ago."

"Halloa!" I cried then, giving a start. "It ain't —'tis—tarnation! it can't be!"

But it was.

There on t'other side, not fifty yards lower down, on a bit of a shelf of earth, that kept crumbling away as the water washed it, was Jael, kneeling down with her young 'un; and, as I looked, something seemed to give my heart a jigg, just as if some coon had pulled a string.

"Well, he's 'bout gone," I says; "and they can't hold out 'bout three minutes; then they'll all

drown together, and she can take old Hez his last babby to nuss—cuss 'em! I'm safe enough. What's it got to do with me? I shan't move."

I took out my wet cake of 'bacca, and whittled off a bit, shoved it in my cheek, shut my knife with a click, and sot thar watchin' of 'em—father, and mother, and bairn.

"You've been too happy, you have," I says out loud; not as they could hear it, for the noise of the waters. "Now you'll be sorry for other people. Drown, darn yer! stock, and lock, and barrel; I'm safe."

Just then, as I sot and chawed, telling myself as a chap would be mad to try and save his friends out of such a flood, let alone his enemies, darn me! if Jael didn't put that there little squealer's hands together, and hold them up as if she was making it say its prayers—a born fool!—when that thar string seemed to be pulled, inside me like, agin my heart; and—I couldn't help it—I jumped up.

"Say, Dab," I says to myself, "don't you be a fool. You hate that lot like pyson, you do. Don't you go and drown yerself."

I was 'bout mad, you know, and couldn't do as I liked, for, if I didn't begin to rip off my things, wet and hanging to me. Cuss me! how they did stick!—but I cleared half on 'em off, and then, like a mad fool, I made a run and a jump, and was fighting hard with the water to get across to Hez's wife and child.

It was a bit of a fight. Down I went, and up I went, and the water twisted me like a leaf: but I got out of the roar and thunder, on to the bit of a shelf where Jael knelt; when, if the silly thing

didn't begin to hold up to me her child; and her lips, poor darling, said dumbly, "Save it! save it!"

In the midst of that rush and roar as I saw that poor gal, white, horrified, and with her yaller hair clinging round her, all my old love for her comes back, and I swore a big oath as I'd save her for myself, or die.

I tore her dress into ribbons, for there warn't a moment to lose, and I bound that bairn somehow on to my shoulders, she watching me the while; and then, with my heart beating madly, I caught her in my arms, she clinging tightly to me in her fear, and I stood up, thinking how I could get back, and making ready to leap.

The flood didn't wait for that, though. In a moment there was a quiver of the bank, and it went from beneath my feet, leaving me wrastling with the waters once more.

I don't know how I did it, only that, after a fight and being half smothered, I found myself crawling up the side of the Gulch, ever so low down, and dragging Jael into a safe place with her bairn.

She fell down afore me, hugged my legs, and kissed my feet; and then she started up and began staring up and down, ending by seeing, just above us, old Hez clinging there still, with his sound arm rammed into the bush, and his body swept out by the fierce stream.

The next moment she had seized me by the arm, and was pynting at him, and she gave a wild kind of shriek.

"He's a gone coon, my gal," I says, though she couldn't hear me; and I was gloating over her beautiful white face and soft, clear neck, as I

thought that now she was mine—all mine. I'd saved her out of the flood, and there was no Hez to stand in our way.

"Save him!—save him!" she shrieked in my ear.

What, Hez? Save Hez, to come between us once more? Save her husband—the man I hated, and would gladly see die? Oh, I couldn't do it; and my looks showed it, she reading me like a book the while. No, he might drown—he was drowned—must be. No: just then he moved. But, nonsense! I wasn't going to risk my life for his, and cut my own throat like, as to the futur'.

She went down on her knees to me though, pointing again at where Hez still floated; and the old feeling of love for her was stronger on me than ever.

"You're asking me to die for you, Jael!" I shouted in her ear.

"Save him—save Hez!" she shrieked.

"Yes, save him!" I groaned to myself "Bring him back to the happiness that might be mine. But she loves him—she loves him; and I must."

I give one look at her—as I thought my last—and I couldn't help it. If she had asked me dumbly, as she did, to do something ten times as wild, I should have done it; and, with a run, I got well up above Hez afore I jumped in once more, to have the same fight with the waters till I was swept down to the bush where he was.

I'd got my knife in my teeth to cut the bush away, and let him free; but as I was swept against it my weight tore it away, and Hez and I went down the stream together; him so done up that he lay helpless on the water.

Something seemed to tell me to finish him off.

A minute under water would have done it; but Jael's face was before me, and at last I got to the other side, with her climbing along beside us; and if it hadn't been for the hand she stretched down to me, I should never have crawled out with old Hez—I was that done.

As I dropped down panting on the rock, Jael came to my side, leaned over me, and kissed me, and I turned away, for the next moment she was trying hard, and bringing her husband to, and I was beginning to feel once more that I had been a fool.

I ain't much more to tell, only that the flood went down 'most as quick as it had come up, and Hez got all right again with his broken arm, and did well. They wanted muchly to be friends; but I kep' away. I felt as I'd been a fool to save him, and I was kinder shamed like of it; so I took off to 'Frisco, where, after chumming about, I took to going voyages to Panama and back, and the sea seemed to suit me like, and there I stuck to it; and one day a ship comes into 'Frisco, where I was hanging ashore after a long drinking bout, and I heer'd as they wanted a man or two to fill up, because a couple had deserted to the diggings.

"Whar for?" I says to the officer.

"Discovering—up North," he says.

"That'll do," I says. "I'm yer man; only I don't think as you'll get gold if you finds it, 'cause the water'll all freeze when you wants to wash it."

"We want to find the North Pole, my lad," he says.

"And what'll yer do with it when yer find it?" I says.

"The president wants it down in New York, to put in the big gardens, for the Great Bear to climb, if we can catch him, too."

Wal, seeing as it promised plenty of amusement, I stuck to my bond, and went with them. And a fine time we had of shooting, and sledging, and exploring. We found the North Pole, after being away from the ship a month. One chap swore it was only the mast of a friz-up ship, sticking out of the ice; but skipper said it was the North Pole, and I cut a bit off with the saw. That's a bit as I'm whittling.

We couldn't get it out then, so we turned back to reach the ship, and get tackle to rig out and draw it; and while we was going back I turned so snoozy that, 'gainst orders, I lay down on the ice and went off bang to sleep. Ain't seen anything of em, I 'spose?

"Well, no," said the doctor, winking at us, as the Yankee whittled away, "I haven't. You expect to see them again?"

"'Spect? Of course I do. They'll come back to pull up the North Pole, and pick me up on the way. If they don't I'll show you where it lies."

"Lies; yes, where it lies," said the doctor. "Well, whereabouts does it lie?"

"Heigh-ho—yaw—aw—aw—hum?" went the Yankee, with the most awful yawn I ever heard; and then, as we looked, he seemed to go all at once into water—body, clothes, bones, and all—till there was nothing left before us but the knife and the bit of wood he had been whittling; and we shrank back, feeling all of a shiver, composed of equal parts of cold and fear.

I thought the doctor would have had a fit, he was so disappointed, and he stamped about the ice until he grew quite blue in the face.

"The last chance!" he cried—"the last chance!"

He did not know how true a prophet he was; for the next day, when we set to and searched for another specimen of suspended animation, not one could we find. We could not even hit upon one of the old elephants: nothing but ice—ice—ice everywhere; and, now that the stimulus of making strange discoveries was over, the men began to grumble.

"I don't like the state of affairs, doctor," I said. "I fear there's mutiny on the way."

"Why?" he said.

"The men are growing so discontented with their provisions; but hush, here they are."

The doctor's nephew was standing by me as the crew came up, looking fierce and angry.

"What's the matter, my lads?" I said, when they all came close to me, and thrust their tongues in their cheeks.

"Look here, skipper," said Binny Scudds, who seemed to be leader, "we've had enough of this here!"

"My good man——" began the doctor.

"Now that'll do, old skyantific!" cried Binny. "We've had enough of you. Who's been doin' nothin' but waste good, wholesome sperrits, by stuffing black beadles, and dirty little fishes, and hinsecks in 'em, till there ain't a drop fit to drink?"

"But, Scudds——" I began.

"That'll do!" he shouted fiercely; and he threat-

ened me with an ice pick. "We've had enough of it, I tell yer!"

"Look here, my man," said the doctor; and his nephew got behind him.

"Yes, and look here," said Scudds. "You want to diskiver the North Pole, don't yer?"

"Well, you are very impertinent, my man," said the doctor; "but, yes, I do."

"Then you shall diskiver it along o' the skipper, and young stowaway there."

"And what will you do?" said the doctor.

"Oh," said Scudds, "me, and Borstick, and my mates is agoin' back. We've had enough of it, I tell yer."

"But how are we to go on without you?" said the doctor.

"I'll show yer," said Scudds. "Now mates!"

To my intense horror, and in spite of my struggles, they seized us all three; and then, with a lot of laughing and cheering, they brought up some pieces of rope, and three good-sized blocks of ice.

"What are you going to do, scoundels?" I shrieked.

"Well," said Scudds, grinning, "my mates and me's of opinion that the North Pole is down in the hole, and we're agoin' to send you three there to see."

"But it's murder!" I cried.

"It's in the service of science," said the doctor, blandly. "We shall make great discoveries. You won't mind, Alfred?" he said, to his nephew.

"I should have been delighted, uncle, if I had only procured my skates," said the young fellow.

"These here's better than skates," said Scudds, grinning; and, to my extreme horror, they bound the young man to a block of ice, carried it to the edge of the crater, gave it a slight push, and away it went down, and down, rapidly gliding till it entered the dark mist toward the bottom.

"He'll discover it first," said the doctor, calmly.

"But no one will know," I said, bitterly.

"We may get up again first," he said, radiantly, as the men tied him on in his turn.

"Good luck to you, if you do," said Scudds, grinning, as he tied the last knot binding the stout old fellow to the second block of ice.

"*Au revoir*, Captain!" said the doctor, smiling; and then they pushed him on to the inclined way, and he glided off, waving his hand as he went, till he was nearly half-way down, and then the crew seized me.

"Not without a struggle!" I said; and seizing an iron bar used for breaking ice, I laid about me, knocking one fellow after another down, and sending them gliding over the sides of the awful gulf, till only Scudds remained behind.

"Not yet, skipper!" he cried, avoiding my blow, and springing at my throat—"not yet;" and the next minute we were engaged in a desperate struggle, each trying with all his might to get the other to the edge of that awful slope, and hurl him down.

Twice he had me on the brink and his savage look seemed to chill my blood; but with an effort I wrenched myself away, and prolonged the struggle, getting the better of him, till, filled with the same savage thoughts as he, I got him right to the edge.

"Not yet, skipper—not yet!" he exclaimed; and

then, allowing himself to fall, he drew me, as it were, over his head, and the next moment I was hanging upon the icy slope, holding on only by one of his hands, and vainly trying to get a footing, for my feet kept gliding away.

"You villain, you shall die with me!" I cried, clinging tenaciously to his hand to drag him down, too, but he looked down laughingly at me.

"I shall go back and say I found the North Pole all by myself!" he cried, with a hideous grin; and then, apparently without an effort, he shook me off, and I began to glide down, down, down, into the horrible black mist below me!

As I glided over the ice, which was wonderfully smooth, my rate of progress grew each moment more rapid, till it was like lightning in its speed. I fancied I heard Scudd's mocking laugh; but it was far distant, and now I was nearing the mist each moment, and instead of cold I could feel a strange burning sensation in my head.

"What of those gone before?" I asked myself, as I slid on at lightning speed. "Have they been dashed to pieces, or have they plunged into some horrible abyss? Yes, that must be it," I thought, for now I was through the mist, and speeding on to what looked like the hole of the great funnel, down which I was hurried.

The sensation was not unpleasant, but for the heat, and, moved now by curiosity, I struggled into a sitting position; then, feet first, I skimmed on, and on, and on, till right before me there seemed to be an edge, over which I slid into intense darkness; ever going on down, down, down, with the noise of wind rushing by me as I fell, till my head

spun round; then there was a strange sensation of giddy drowsiness; and, lastly, all was blank.

. . . . .

"Yes, he'll do now," said a familiar voice. "He's getting on. Head beautifully cool."

"Eh?" I said, staring at the speaker.

"Well, skipper, that was a narrow touch for you, I thought once you were gone."

"So did I," was my reply; "but how did you and Bostock get out?"

"Wandering a little still," said the doctor, in a whisper to Bostock. "Get out?" he said aloud. "Oh, easily enough."

"But, but," I said, faintly, holding my hand to my head—"that horrible crater!"

"Lie still, my dear captain," he said, "and don't worry. You'll be stronger in a day or two."

"But tell me!" I said, appealingly.

"Well, there's little to tell," he said, smiling. "Only that you pitched head first twenty feet down the slope of that iceberg three weeks ago, and you've been in a raging fever ever since."

"Then the overturning of the iceberg—the dive of the steamer—the seven frozen sailors—the crater?"

"My dear fellow," he said, gently, "you've been delirious, and your head evidently is not quite right yet. There, drink that."

I took what he gave me, and sank into a deep sleep, from which I awoke much refreshed, and by degrees I learned that I had slipped while we were on the beautiful iceberg, and had a very narrow escape of my life; that, far from walking back to

the steamer, and sitting on the deck to hear a scraping noise, I had been carried carefully on board by Bostock and Scudds. Imagination did the rest."

I need not continue our adventures in our real voyage, for they were very uneventful. The doctor got some nice specimens and thoroughly enjoyed his trip; but we were stopped on all sides by the ice, and at last had to return, loaded with oil and preserved natural history matters, after what the doctor called the pleasantest trip he had ever had.

But, all the same, it would have been very interesting if the Seven Frozen Sailors had really been thawed out to give us forth their yarns—of course always excepting the rush down into the misty crater. However, here are their stories, told by seven pens, and may they make pleasant many a Fireside.

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